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APRIL 2004

WORLD SOCCER comment

THE DEATH of John Charles was another break with football's more innocent past. Those who saw Charles in his prime say he deserves to be remembered as one of the greats; the greatest Welsh footballer of all time, and the best foreigner ever to play in Italy. Yet Charles died virtually penniless, though not, remarkably, at all bitter.

Leeds United have renamed their West Stand in memory of Charles, almost half a century on from the transfer, to Juventus, that paid for the stand's construction. The great irony, of course, is that such a gesture will not help Leeds one iota in their battle against colossal debts of £100million and rising. Indeed, the John Charles Stand could yet be demolished to make way for a supermarket or housing estate if, in the worst-case scenario, Leeds' assets have to be liquidated.

Charles was too much of a gentleman to criticise the millionaire signings that landed Leeds in their predicament, but he must surely have been disgusted at the wreckless spending that accompanied Peter Ridsdale's time as chairman of the club.

That Ridsdale has now moved on and re-emerged in charge of Barnsley raises all sorts of questions about how individual businessmen gain control of football clubs – questions that have conveniently been ignored during the recent battle for control of Manchester United.

Neither the Coolmore pair of J P McManus and John Magnier nor the American millionaire Malcolm Glazer claim to be United fans or even to be that interested in football. The Irish appear to be pursuing a personal vendetta against Alex Ferguson, while Glazer foolishly believes he can milk further profits from a United commercial operation that is already the envy of clubs around the world.

United have won the European Cup more often than McManus, Magnier and Glazer have attended matches at Old Trafford. They're not interested in basking in the glory of an injury-time winner at Camp Nou or a Ryan Giggs solo goal at Villa Park. They are corporate hustlers of the worst kind – and yet football is powerless to prevent them from taking control of the world's most popular club.

Suddenly the innocent world of John Charles seems light years away.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

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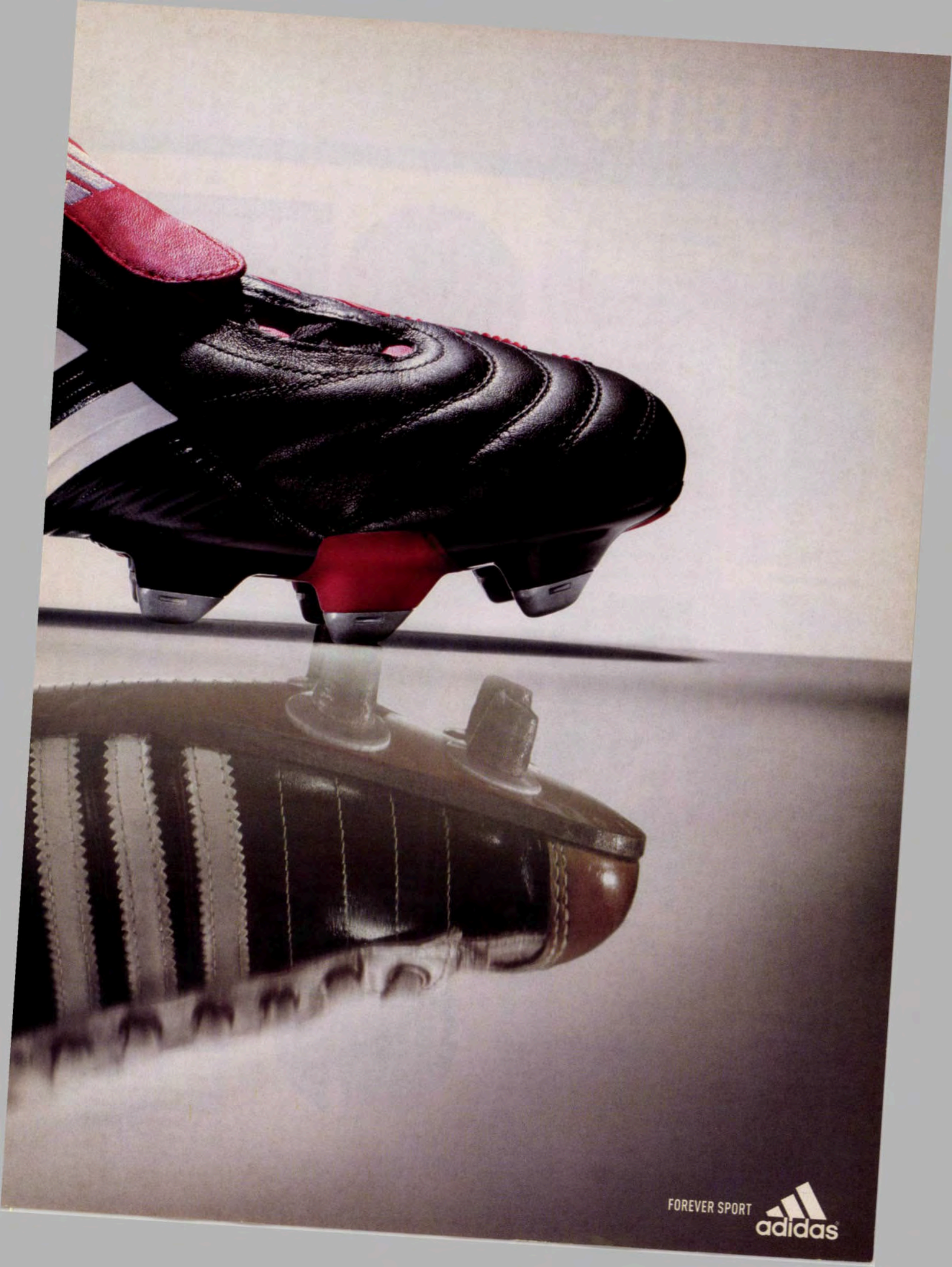
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UNITED STATES: The 2004 Major League Soccer campaign is due to kick-off soon – amid accusations that MLS is not doing enough to encourage Hispanic involvement. **Page 64**

Bilardo loses it

ARGENTINA: The sanity of Estudiantes coach Carlos Bilardo was called into question following some bizarre behaviour by the former national team boss. **Page 62**

Rivaldo quits Cruzeiro

BRAZIL: A matter of weeks after returning home from Europe, World Cup winner Rivaldo walked out on champions Cruzeiro in protest at the sacking of coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo. **Page 26**

JOHN CHARLES R.I.P.

Tributes poured in following the death of former Leeds, Juventus and Wales player John Charles, who died aged 72 after a series of illnesses. **Page 8**

Ranieri under pressure

ENGLAND: Only success in the Champions League Final in May might prevent Claudio Ranieri from being fired as Chelsea coach after his side were beaten in the League and Cup by Arsenal. **Page 24**

Bayern Cup shock

GERMANY: Holders Bayern Munich were dumped out of the national Cup by Second Division side Alemannia Aachen. **Page 22**

UNDER INVESTIGATION

ITALY: The finances of professional clubs came under renewed scrutiny after police raided club offices amid allegations of false accounting and illegal payments. **Page 20**

BERNABEU SCANDAL!

SPAIN: Valencia were left seething after the referee awarded a highly dubious penalty to Real Madrid in the dying seconds of their crucial League match in the Spanish capital. Figo converted the spot-kick, the match finished 1-1 and Real stayed top. **Page 18**

Nations Cup joy for hosts

TUNISIA: After two previous defeats in the Final and at the third time of hosting, Tunisia won their first Nations Cup title, beating Morocco in an all-north African finale. **Page 46**

Prime asset...outside Leeds' Elland Road ground

King John:

Brian Glanville pays tribute to the late John Charles

JOHN CHARLES: hero or victim? Both, perhaps. A redoubtable hero on the field, he was unquestionably one of the great players of his epoch and supremely versatile – a powerful centre-half transformed in a trice into a stupendous centre-forward. Yet off the field, something of an innocent whose marriage collapsed in Italy as his business ventures collapsed both there and in England.

Not that Charles ever seemed to care very much, which was part of the problem. He seemed to glide through his life off the field, unconcerned with what might crudely be called the bottom line, whether it related to the doomed restaurant he opened with his team-mate Umberto Colombo in Turin, the pub he had in England, or his time as player-manager at little Hereford United.

There, it is said, the correspondence piled up unopened, and one Saturday afternoon the nonchalant Charles was still talking to a reporter when an official looked in and reminded him kick-off was only five minutes away and he was meant to be playing!

Charles made, and lost, a lot of money in Italy, but were he playing today, with his tremendous talents, he would surely be a multi-millionaire with nothing to worry about in his life beyond the football pitch.

I still wonder whether, had he only been able to play that evening in Gothenburg in the 1958 World Cup quarter-finals, whether Wales might have beaten Brazil, rather than succumb 1-0 to a streaky goal by Pele. Charles was injured having been savagely kicked by the Hungarians in their group play-off; his replacement, the smaller Colin Webster, could never do such damage in the air.

It was the late Webster who felt the wrath of Charles, as father figure of the team, when he misbehaved at a nightclub before the Brazil game. Hardly had the Welsh players arrived than Webster was involved in an altercation with a waiter. "If you hit him, Colin," threatened Charles, "I'm going to throw you out of here!" Webster did worse than that, butting the poor fellow in the face. True to his promise, Charles grabbed hold of his team-mate and flung him down the steps of the club. Webster looked up at him and said: "I didn't hit him, John! I headed him!"

For all his power, Charles on the field was truly the Gentle Giant, as he was known

an all-time great

Star in stripes...for Juventus against Internazionale in 1962

in Italy during his time with Juventus, when they weren't calling him King John.

He showed a true Corinthian spirit. In one of his first derby matches against Torino he brushed past a defender, leaving him on the ground and himself with a clear run on goal. But he stopped, turned back and attended to his opponent.

Wine, Welshman and song

Juve fans loved Charles and one night gathered outside his house to serenade him. He invited them all in and plied them with wine from his cellar.

Curiously, despite his precocious abilities, his debut for Wales was a disappointment. He made it as a centre-half against Northern Ireland when he was only 18. Perhaps the occasion was too much for him. He did get another match the following season, but wasn't fully established for three more years.

Charles was born in 1931 and had a brief spell with local club Swansea Town before signing for Leeds United on his 16th birthday. He started there as a centre-half, the position I first saw him play in when as a defiant 18-year-old he appeared against Arsenal at Highbury in a sixth round FA Cup tie that Leeds would lose 1-0. The moment that sticks in my mind is when Charles, desperate to avoid giving away a corner, ran over his own goal-line to finish painfully in the moat.

In an inspired moment during the early 1950s Leeds manager Frank Buckley decided to use Charles at centre-forward, and he responded immediately. Standing 6ft 1in, he had a great ability in the air, but also a fine touch for so big a man, and an exciting burst of speed to go with it.

The Welshman's many goals helped Leeds win promotion to the top flight in 1956, and he then enjoyed a marvellously prolific season in the First Division before leaving for Juve.

Anyone who feared the more defensive practices of Italian football would make him less effective had cause to think again. For he had a phenomenal first season, finishing League top scorer with 28 goals and winning a championship medal.

Charles had cost Juventus £65,000, exactly what Roma would pay for him in 1962 after he had made a brief, unhappy return to Leeds. Although his time in the Italian capital proved an anti-climax, Charles was voted the best foreigner ever to play in Italy. How bitterly sad it was that his latter years were dogged by a cruel set of illnesses, including Alzheimer's disease, and by debt. But at Juventus there was always deep affection and support to be found.

JOHN CHARLES – LIFE AND TIMES

- December 27, 1931: Born in Swansea.
- 1946: Signed as an amateur for Swansea Town but was never to play for them.
- 1947: Signed for Leeds United on his 16th birthday.
- April 23, 1949: Made Leeds debut aged 17 years four months.
- March 8, 1950: Became the then youngest ever Wales international at the age of 18 years 71 days when appearing against Northern Ireland.
- 1952-53: Leeds manager Frank Buckley moved Charles from centre-half to centre-forward. He scored 26 goals in his first season in that position.
- 1953-54: Scored 42 League goals, a Leeds record that still stands.
- 1955-56: Helped Leeds win promotion from the old English Second Division.
- May 1957: Joined Juventus for a then British record fee of £65,000.
- 1957-58: Won the first of three Serie A titles with Juventus.
- 1958: Helped Wales reach the World Cup quarter-finals in Sweden.
- 1962: Returned to Leeds for £53,000 but played only 11 games. Joined Roma in a £65,000 deal.
- 1963: Joined Cardiff City.
- October 27, 1965: Made his 38th and last appearance for Wales in a 2-1 win over the Soviet Union in a World Cup qualifier in Cardiff.
- 1966: Became player-manager of Hereford United.
- 1971: Left Hereford and later became manager of Merthyr Tydfil.
- 1987: Became technical director of Hamilton Steelers in Canada before leaving the game to run a pub, a toy shop and a children's clothes shop.
- January 2004: Underwent an emergency heart operation in Italy during a tour to promote his autobiography. Had part of his right foot amputated.
- February 2004: Flown back to Yorkshire by air ambulance arranged by Juventus.
- February 21, 2004: Died, aged 72, in a Wakefield hospital.

Silent tribute...the current Leeds side pay their respects

Mali and Senegal's 1-1 draw means they both progress to the quarter-finals of the African Nations Cup in Tunisia

02/02/04

Aachen prove that giantkilling isn't dead as they celebrate their win over holders Bayern Munich in the German Cup

04/02/04

South Africa, needing to beat Morocco by four goals to qualify for the Nations Cup quarter-finals, can only draw 1-1

04/02/04

HEADLINERS

FRANCILEUDO DOS SANTOS

Born in Brazil, employed in France, worshipped in Tunisia

BY CHRISTMAS this season Brazil-born striker Francileudo dos Santos had played a major role in Sochaux's climb to fourth place in the French League.

But Santos had a New Year's Day present that spoiled the holiday reveries of president Jean-Claude Plessis – the decision that he wanted to play for Tunisia in the African Nations Cup.

Plessis was astonished. "It never crossed my mind," he said. "I knew he had played in Tunisia but I never thought his commitment was anything more than as a club professional. He told me he'd been thinking it over since October – which was a secret he had kept from everyone, it seems."

The turbulent waters became further muddied with unconfirmed reports that Santos had received an international signing-on fee in the region of £80,000. Plessis said: "I heard about certain sums changing hands but when I put the question to them, both the player and the president of the federation denied it."

Santos made his Tunisia debut in a finals warm-up game against Benin in Sfax and scored the winning goal. It was a trick he repeated in the opening match of the finals as Tunisia beat Rwanda 2-1. Two more goals as a substitute followed in the stormy 3-0 defeat of DR Congo that qualified Tunisia for the quarter-finals with a game to spare. Three games, four goals and he was already a national hero.

Better was to come. Tunisia beat Senegal 1-0 in the quarter-finals, Nigeria 5-3 on penalties in the semis and then Morocco 2-1 in the Final with Santos striking the opening goal after four minutes. That fourth goal put him joint top of the tournament scorers' chart.

Born on March 20, 1979, Santos never played serious senior football in Brazil. At 17 he was snatched away from his home town of Ze Doca, Maranhao province, and brought to Belgium by Standard Liege. Two hesitant seasons in the youth section duly persuaded the club they had mistaken the depth of his potential.

Etoile Sahel spied out Santos during a friendly against Standard in summer 1998 and signed him. The forward spent two years in Tunisia, scored 32 goals in 50 League games and stayed long enough to celebrate the birth of a son.

But when coach Jean Fernandez returned to France in 2000, to Second Division Sochaux, he took Santos with him. He duly scored 21 goals to fire them to promotion in his first season.

Just as Santos departed for the Nations Cup under a cloud, so he returned to suspicion and confusion. When Sochaux subjected him to a full medical two days after his return a urine check apparently tested positive for corticoids, steroids that reduce fatigue and swelling. The club subsequently reported testers had mistakenly identified corticoids instead of the naturally-produced corticosterone. Plessis said: "It is produced by the body and can be generated by stress."

Santos was no stranger to that particular emotion. "You must understand my ambition to play in the big tournaments," he said. "There was no chance I'd ever play for Brazil. I'm not stupid. Tunisia offered me an alternative chance and I would never have forgiven myself if I had not taken it up.

"The first time I went to Tunisia I had never heard of it. I thought we were in Turkey. But very soon I learned to like the place and the people."

If Tunisia reach the World Cup in Germany and meet Brazil? "I'll ask not to play. I wouldn't mind in a friendly but the World Cup means too much to every Brazilian. I couldn't turn on my own."

Keir Radnedge

'I'd never heard of Tunisia. The first time I went there I thought we were in Turkey'

Spurs are left dazed and confused as Manchester City, 3-0 down at half-time, pull off one of the greatest comebacks in FA Cup history by winning 4-3

04/02/04

Hibernian and Rangers draw 1-1 in the Scottish League Cup semi-finals, with Hibs winning the penalty shoot-out to set up a Final encounter with Livingston

05/02/04

Roma hammer Juventus 4-0 to boost their title hopes

08/02/04

JAMES HAYTER

Scored the fastest hat-trick in English Football League history – two minutes and 20 seconds in the 84th, 85th and 86th minutes of Bournemouth's Second Division game against Wrexham. His parents, Richard and Mary, missed it – they left the ground after 80 minutes, with their son still on the subs' bench, to catch a ferry back to the Isle of Wight.

ARJEN ROBBEN

The PSV Eindhoven starlet proved that blue, not red, is the colour of money in the Premiership. Robben will play for Chelsea next season after the London club had a bid of £12million accepted by PSV, gazumping Manchester United's offer of £8m.

LOUIS SAHA

Manchester United's new striker staked his claim for a place in France's Euro 2004 squad after scoring on his international debut in a 2-0 friendly victory over Belgium in Brussels.

ROGER LEMERRE

The Frenchman became the first coach to have been in charge of winning teams at both the European Championship and African Nations Cup finals, after guiding Tunisia to glory in Tunis.

DAVID HEALY

The Preston striker ended Northern Ireland's record goal drought when he scored against Norway in a friendly in Belfast. The Norwegians won 4-1, but Healy's goal was still celebrated – it came 1,298 minutes after the last one, by Steve Lomas against Poland in February 2002.

GORDON TAYLOR

The players' union chief is leading the debate on head injuries

GORDON TAYLOR, head of the English Professional Footballers' Association and an influential leading member of the world players' body FIFPro, believes the game cannot afford to summarily dismiss the idea of using headguards.

FIFA, without any debate or discussion, has provisionally given the go-ahead to head protection.

Taylor's instinctive reaction, like that of most traditional soccer men, is one of caution about such a radical change. But the PFA boss, whose organisation is helping to fund a prospective study in England into the long-term risks of heading a football, says there should be an open debate on the issue.

"If a causal link can be established between heading a football and suffering types of brain trauma soccer has to take it seriously," he says.

"The game has a duty of care to those who play. Sport by its nature has dangers, that is part of its appeal. But those risks must be understood and acknowledged.

"If it is shown that heading a football could prove dangerous in later life people in the game should keep their minds open to the debate – and ways of eliminating injury should be assessed.

"I don't know whether headguards would do that, but the possibility can be investigated.

"But what I would say is that if headguards are to be used, then all players in a match should be wearing them rather than just one of the teams or a few individuals.

"Another possibility is to consider whether the act of heading the ball remains a part of the game. Heading has been integral to the sport for more than 100 years, but sports do change with time.

"At the PFA office we have a thick, thick file on the issue of head injuries and the possible link with dementia and illnesses like Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's.

"We have literally dozens and dozens of cases brought to our attention each year. The anecdotal evidence feels powerful. But what is needed is scientific proof."

Jim Holden

Harry Kewell is named Oceania's Player of the Year

09/02/04

Hosts Tunisia beat Nigeria to reach the African Nations Cup Final

11/02/04

Goals from Atsushi Yanagisawa and Alex give Japan a 2-0 friendly win over Iraq in Tokyo as the countries continue their preparations for the 2006 World Cup qualifiers

12/02/04

WS WORLD SOCCER Brian Glanville

...on the Bates legacy at Stamford Bridge... Peter Kenyon's instant demands...UEFA's threats over club debts...and a good idea from Sepp Blatter

BACK in 1988, Ken Bates, Chelsea's abrasive, even confrontational, chairman, addressed a group of journalists at Stamford Bridge thus: "I'm going back to my 300-acre farm. You lot can bugger off to your council houses."

Now Bates, as Chelsea chairman, is no more. He had already been kicked off the match programme and excluded from his habitual appearance on Chelsea TV. This coincided with the appointment of a new, American, chief executive of Chelsea Village, with its conglomeration of hotels, clubs and restaurants behind what was once the Shed.

Bates can console himself with the £17million he was paid for his shares by Roman Abramovich, but it seemed sad, for all his old intransigence, to see him so suddenly reduced to being an un-person at The Bridge.

In recent years, his aggressive relations with the press – whom he once threw out of their box in the East Stand into a wretched TV gantry on the West Stand – have certainly improved. Modulating, you might say, from actively hostile to merely ambivalent. I was one of those journalists invited to a generous and genial farewell dinner.

Bates was certainly lucky when Abramovich and his billions came along. This at a time when Chelsea were £90m in debt and, though Bates kept insisting all was financially well, reportedly in dire danger. Lucky, too, over the way he was able to keep Stamford Bridge.

When he originally paid just £1 to take over the club and its debts from the Mears family, who had founded Chelsea in 1905, he didn't buy the ground – though Brian Mears, the previous chairman, has said he offered it to Bates for £650,000. SB Properties, alias the Mears, sold the ground to developers, who threatened for years to turn it into flats. Bates held out and was rewarded when the property market abruptly and blessedly collapsed, enabling him to buy the stadium.

In the interim, he had initiated a controversial Save The Bridge campaign, whereby fans who'd already paid for their tickets were expected to donate to a fund, and threatened to put an electric fence around the pitch to deter hooligans. An initiative that was duly forbidden.

There is no doubt that in recent years he has brought a cornucopia of foreign talent to the club, twice winning the FA Cup, which for so long seemed no more than a mirage.

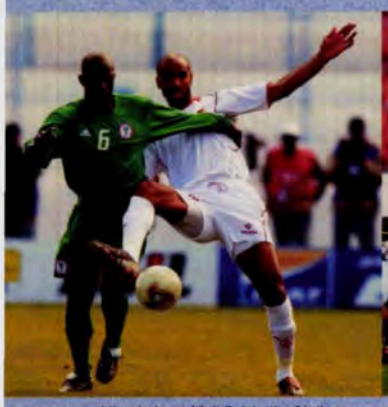
'Ken Bates was certainly lucky when Roman Abramovich and his billions came along – at a time when Chelsea were £90million in debt'

Another piece of luck, if you can call it that – for it was a sad and wretched occurrence – was the death of his bitter rival Matthew Harding in a helicopter crash on the way back from a League Cup tie in Bolton. Harding, a self-made millionaire, an impassioned Chelsea fan and a heavy drinker, whom Bates once banned from the directors' box, proved to be a great deal more than a mere cash cow. He wanted control of the club.

His money built the Matthew Harding North Stand, and he was strongly opposed to the development of Chelsea Village, favouring instead an increase in the ground's capacity.

Bates in his time made many enemies, but I for one will miss him. Nor was he always in the wrong. I remember especially the way he was traduced in the High Court action brought by Paul Elliott against Dean Saunders, whose challenge at Anfield had ended the Chelsea defender's career. Immediately after he'd come up from the dressing-room at half-time, Bates told me: "The players want to linch Saunders. They say he stamped on him." These words he quietly repeated in the witness box. Mr Justice Drake inexplicably declared that Bates had a bad memory. Nonsense.

STILL on the subject of Chelsea, the new chief executive, Peter Kenyon, wasted little time in shouting the odds, once his 'gardening leave' from Manchester United had ended. Having spent so much money, he declared, Chelsea had to win something. "That's what we do."



Nigeria beat Mali 2-1 in the Nations Cup third-place play-off

13/02/04

Hosts Tunisia celebrate winning the Nations Cup for the first time

14/02/04

Jose Antonio Reyes scores twice as Arsenal beat Chelsea in the FA Cup

15/02/04

Eh? Though Chelsea have indeed in recent years won the FA Cup and the League Cup, they have only once in their history taken the championship, and that was back in 1955. Such a statement put enormous pressure on manager Claudio Ranieri, who, after a recent disappointing home game, answered probing questions from the press with admirable good humour and resilience.

Meanwhile, who knows what the situation at Manchester United will be by the time you read this. One moment we hear that Alex Ferguson is prepared to make peace over the racehorse Rock of Gibraltar with John Magnier and J P McManus; then that he is determined to plough on into the Dublin High Court for those breeding rights. Small wonder that United's hierarchy would like to put an end to it, for who knows what could be revealed?

LARS Christer Olsson has only just got his feet under the table as the new chief executive of UEFA, but already he has come out with a bold challenge to Europe's profligate clubs.

They will, he thunders, "have to prove they have sound finances to play in our competitions". They will be out in the cold if they have "large debts", which he picturesquely equates with "financial doping". It's a supreme piece of altruism but he would have to be as lucky as Ken Bates to implement it.

Barcelona's debts are huge, yet somehow they still keep buying new players. Real Madrid were colossally in the red until they sold their training ground. In Italy, vast debt is the rule rather than the exception. Lazio have been in chaos after the failure of profligate Sergio Cragnotti's company; and just look at Parmalat and Parma. Roma have had severe financial problems.

Cragnotti, not for the first time, has been arrested, but don't bother to watch this space. He was even, years ago, put very briefly in prison after the collapse of a conglomerate, but like the Prime Minister and owner of Milan, Silvio Berlusconi – twice sentenced but never imprisoned – he seems Teflon-made.

As for England's leading clubs, which of them is without economic sin; Manchester United abundantly apart? Leeds ran up a debt of over £80m. Chelsea's was £10m more until Roman Abramovich came along. Arsenal, at long last, seem able to build their new stadium, but the financial burden will be huge.

Olsson's ambition to clean out these Augean stables is admirable, but he would have to be a Hercules to do it.

SEPP BLATTER, as a caustic German journalist once told me, might well have 50 new ideas every day of which 51 are bad, but a recent one was surely good. The idea – to reduce the number of substitutes used in friendly games – is now, in fact, passed into FIFA law after the International Board voted to limit the number to six.

Blatter championed the cause in the teeth of opposition from Sven Goran Eriksson, who, as we know, is in the abysmal habit of making as many as 10 substitutions in friendlies. This, arguably, reduces them to farce and constitutes a kind of fraud on the public, which has, after all, paid to see a proper game between teams as full as injury and tactical replacement will allow.

There was a colossal crowd at Old Trafford in November for England's friendly against Denmark; and it would have served Eriksson and the FA right had all 64,000 of them demanded their money back on the spot.

Read Brian Glanville's weekly column at www.worldsoccer.com

Notes & quotes

"There is as much chance of me buying Buckingham Palace as Barcelona buying Thierry Henry."
Arsene Wenger rebuts speculation linking Arsenal's star striker with another La Liga heavyweight.

"We have one or two young players who need to remember just how lucky we all are to play for Manchester United and show that out on the pitch."
Manchester United captain Roy Keane criticises his younger team-mates 10 days before he is sent off for stamping on Porto keeper Vitor Baia

"I admit I'm physically and psychologically incapable of returning there."
Michel Platini vows never to set foot in the Heysel stadium – now renamed the King Baudouin – where 39 Juventus fans died before the 1985 Champions Cup Final against Liverpool.

"The grass is so soft, the players feel they are running on sand."
FC Porto coach Jose Mourinho talks of the poor quality turf at his club's Dragao stadium, one of several Euro 2004 venues with surface problems.

Sinking feeling...Porto's pitch

Pavel Nedved is voted Czech Footballer of the Year

16/02/04

Luis Figo receives his 100th cap in Portugal's friendly against England in Faro

18/02/04

Greece extend their unbeaten run to 14 games following a 2-0 victory over Bulgaria in Athens

18/02/04

The USA's Bobby Convey on the move during his side's 1-0 defeat away to Holland

18/02/04

WS WORLD SOCCER Paul Gardner

...on the battle of the high-tech balls

EVERY two years the soccer equipment industry can be relied upon to lash itself into a frenzy.

The feverish activity starts a few months before a World Cup or European Championship. Here come the press releases and the press conferences. This team and that team will sport new strips. There may be some newly-designed boots. There will certainly be a new ball with a clever name.

There seems to be most scope for high-tech engineering skills in the ball itself. Each panel of the 1998 Tricolore had "the same rebound factor". Then "gas-filled micro-balloons under a foam layer" were loosed on the world when Adidas unveiled the Fevernova for the 2002 World Cup. The little balloons were presumably a step up from the "liquid gel cushion" used in the Euro 2000 ball.

There has been disharmony among ball engineers, of course. Who can forget the great panel war of 2000 when Nike came up with the Geo Merlin, a 32-panel ball for the Premiership. Round about the same time, in South America, the Penalty World Stability was making its debut.

The thing about the Penalty ball was it had "only 12 panels compared to the normal 32. With fewer panels and seams, it offers less aerodynamic resistance, and when kicked travels up to 12 per cent faster than regular balls."

As for the Fevernova, it was "25 per cent more accurate and 10 per cent faster than the Tricolore".

For Euro 2004, Adidas is giving us the Roteiro, with no stitched seams, just thermal-bonded panels and an "innovative carcass technology".

Are you with me so far? Because now we get the good stuff, the reason for all this applied technology. To make a better ball and therefore, I'm assuming, a better game. All the above-mentioned models are better than their predecessors. I know this because the manufacturers say so.

The 2000 Geo Merlin, said Nike, was closer to a perfect sphere than any previous ball. According to Adidas, the Fevernova vintage 2002 was phenomenally consistent: it was shot from a special machine 1,000 times, and "its flight never varied". Now the Roteiro is "faster and more technical than ever before".

We have endorsements for you. During Euro 2000, England assistant coach Les Reed saw qualities perhaps only an English devotee would praise: "We've seen centre-halves send headers huge distances, while people are confident of sending passes half the length of the pitch."

'All the new ball models are better than their predecessors. I know this because the manufacturers say so'

David Beckham seems to like innovation. He praises the Fevernova, saying its "power and accuracy are exceptional".

And now he's a big fan of the Roteiro: "I've noticed that the accuracy of my corners, my passing and, of course, my free-kicks improved from using this ball. It is going to be a great ball to play with."

Sorry to break up the party, but here is Slovenia's Zlatko Zahovic on the Fevernova: "The worst ball I've ever played with, it's as light as a balloon and bounces out of control."

At Real Madrid, Beckham's colleague Ivan Helguera doesn't think much of the Roteiro: "It's like a beach ball. I don't like it at all." Betis winger Joaquin chips in with: "It's hard to believe they can call this a ball. It lifts a lot and doesn't follow a true line."

"No one likes this ball, especially the goalkeepers," says Mickael Silvestre of the Fevernova. Belgium's goalkeeping coach Jacky Munaron finds it "too light – a lot of goalkeepers are taken by surprise and are not happy about the quality". And here comes Beckham again, convinced "keepers are going to have a very tough time" against the Roteiro in Portugal.

There you have it. The new scientific ball technology can apparently improve player performance and up the scoring rate. And I haven't even mentioned the magic boots that will enable you to bend it like you-know-who. My considered opinion? It's pretty much a crock of you-know-what.

PS. Did I mention Beckham is under contract to Adidas?

Dida claims the ball as the Republic of Ireland hold Brazil 0-0 in Dublin

18/02/04

Spain recover from 1-0 down to beat Peru 2-1 in Barcelona's Olympic stadium

18/02/04

Milan celebrate Clarence Seedorf's late winner in the 3-2 derby victory over Inter

21/02/04

Notes & quotes

"I'm good physically and would love to play for Argentina at the Athens Olympics and return for another season with Fiorentina."
Veteran Argentinian striker Gabriel Batistuta, now playing in Qatar, sets out the last two objectives of a brilliant career.

"When Ajax lose, I lose even more."
Rafael Van der Vaart on the weight of expectation he has to bear with the Amsterdammers.

"I came to Cruzeiro because of Luxemburgo. I haven't slept a wink and I've decided to leave with him."
Rivaldo quits the Brazilian club in protest at the sacking of his coach.

"Italy is in danger of becoming a police state."
Italian Prime Minister and Milan owner Silvio Berlusconi hits out as fraud police swoop on Serie A and B clubs in search of cooked books.

Last hurrah...Batistuta

WS WORLD SOCCER Mediawatch

News and views from the world's press. Compiled by Keir Radnedge

"After something like that you just want to escape, get out of the place as fast as you can. I don't think I'd ever been so fit in my life, but something doesn't seem to be right. Such a shot should be saved even if you have no arms or legs at all."
– Bayern's Oliver Kahn to German newspaper TZ *after his blunder against Real Madrid in the Champions League.*

"An athlete should eat correctly, sleep properly and drink sensibly. I've never done any of that nonsense. I suppose I would have been ever better if I had – but I wouldn't have enjoyed myself as much!"
– Romario to TV Bandeirentes *on his alternative superstar lifestyle.*

"Your last issue was ridiculous. I leafed through it in five minutes and found nothing of footballing interest. It landed in the rubbish bin after five minutes."
– a reader's letter to Belgian weekly Foot/Sport, *which had marked its Valentine's Day edition by looking at the varying roles of women in Belgian football (administration, refereeing, media, etc).*

I've had it here...Figo

"This week [Real Madrid] has kicked off the process of signing Joaquin – and parting company with Luis Figo. Just one glance at his face tells you that Luis is unhappy. He left Sporting, he left Barcelona and now he's about to leave Madrid. He's a Portuguese wanderer and, if Joaquin signs, his continuing presence makes no sense."
– columnist Roberto Palomar in Marca *on Real's interest in the Betis right-winger.*

"United have not been the same force since selling David Beckham. Seven players have been tried on the right without notable success. But while [Sir Alex] Ferguson has sold unwisely he has also purchased badly, or, in the case of central defence, not at all when he needed to."
– Paul Weaver, in The Guardian, *putting the boot in to Man United.*

So farewell then...

ROQUE MASPOLI, goalkeeper in the Uruguay team that won the 1950 World Cup in Brazil, has died, aged 86. As Penarol coach he won five League titles, the Libertadores Cup and the 1966 World Club Cup.

AUGUSTO DA COSTA, who has died at 83, was Brazil's captain and right-back during the 1950 World Cup Final.

JACQUES GEORGES (pictured), who has died aged 87, was the UEFA president who took much of the weight of the aftermath of the tragedy at the 1985 Champions Cup Final in Brussels.

MAX URBINI, a founding father of today's European football, has died at 79. In at the launch of the European Champions Cup in the mid-1950s, he was editor of *France Football* between 1962 and 1978.

ALBEIRO USURIAGA, 37, a former Colombian international, was killed in a bar shooting in Cali.

Lokomotiv Moscow beat Monaco 2-1 in the Champions League second round, first leg

24/02/04

Deportivo gain the upper hand on Juventus after beating the Italians 1-0 at home in their second round, first leg

25/02/04

Lyon beat Real Sociedad 1-0 in their Champions League opener

25/02/04

Chelsea win 1-0 in Stuttgart to stay on course in the Champions League

25/02/04

WS WORLD SOCCER Tim Vickery

Brazil's Olympic failure was an accident waiting to happen

AT THE TIME of the 1974 World Cup I had just turned nine and was fascinated by the whole thing. I particularly recall the expectations surrounding Brazil's performance – and the disappointment with what they produced.

I've always been curious about that period in Brazilian football. Why did 1970 mark the end of a triumphant era? Of course, it was Pele's last World Cup. But the national championship was launched in 1971. Surely that would have given the Brazilian game a boost, as the Bundesliga had done in West Germany in the early 1960s.

In the event, the Brazilian championship probably confused matters. The dominant team in its first decade were not one of the traditional giants from Rio or Sao Paulo. They were Internacional of Porto Alegre – whose style of play reflected their location in the more European south of Brazil. Their success helped plunge Brazilian football into something of an identity crisis.

But there was something deeper, and I found it in crude form recently when I came upon a collection of magazines from 1972. Brazil were busy organising the Mini World Cup, part of Joao Havelange's campaign to win the FIFA presidency. A number of European nations were invited. Most pulled out, including Holland. "Just between ourselves," said *Placar*, then as now the country's leading football publication, "Holland will not be missed."

These were days long before cable TV or the internet. It was not easy to keep track of what was happening in Europe. And the Dutch national team had done little of note. But the signs were already there. Feyenoord and Ajax had given fair warning of the emergence of a new power, and two year's later Holland ended Brazil's World Cup with a 2-0 win.

What happened to Brazil post-1970 is a cautionary tale about the hidden dangers of winning. Success tends to dry up when it comes to be seen as a birthright rather than the result of a process.

Much has changed since then. Brazil have developed an excellent culture of physical preparation, for example, which underpinned their World Cup triumphs in 1994 and 2002.

But the tendency to underestimate the opposition is never too far away.

'They have no tradition', 'they lack intimacy with the ball', 'we can only be beaten by ourselves' – I've lost count of the number of times these cliches have been trotted out.

This mentality is especially apparent when they face the smaller South American nations, and it can cost them dear. They nearly missed out on the last World Cup after losing six of nine away qualifiers. And now the one title they lack – Olympic gold – will have to wait at least until 2008 after their shock elimination by Paraguay in the qualifiers for this year's Games.

'Success tends to dry up when it comes to be seen as a birthright rather than the result of a process'

"There is a prejudice among Brazilians who don't believe in the quality of anything that comes out of Paraguay," wrote 1970 great Tostao in his ever-excellent column. "The Brazilian players showed disdain for Paraguay, a team without a single famous player."

But it is the minnows who are going to Athens.

Psychological factors never explain everything. There are solid technical reasons for Brazil's defeat.

Coach Ricardo Gomes confessed that his team had problems turning possession into goals. He began with a strikeforce of Dagoberto and Robinho, a pair of wingers who are too lightweight to operate up front together in international football. Then he could never make up his mind about Marcel, a big centre-forward who gave penalty area presence but proved incapable of linking the play.

Brazil's important goals were all headers from set-pieces. When they faced Argentina and Paraguay – sides who could defend in the air – they lost 1-0.

With the undoubted talent in their team, Brazil were entitled to believe that they would qualify. But they were not entitled to talk about the rooming arrangements in Athens, the subject of one TV report, before they had booked their place.

The gods of football find ways to punish such precipitation.

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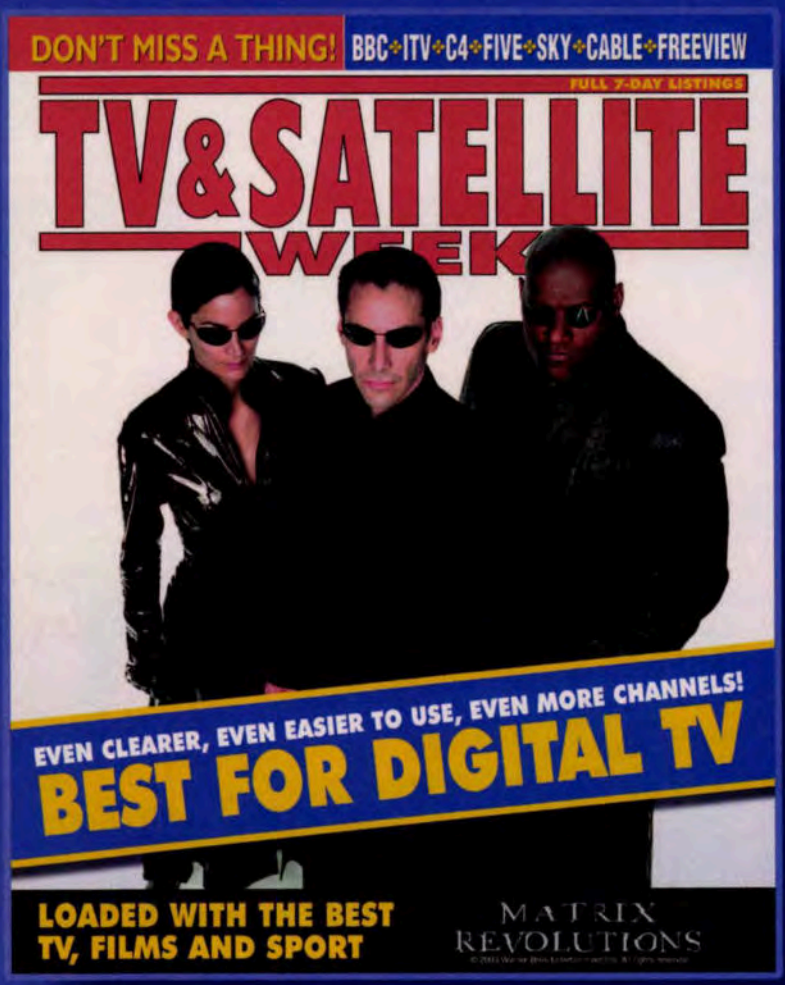

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Bernabeu scandal!

Valencia are left seething after an outrageous penalty decision

SID LOWE in Madrid

THE TIMING WAS impeccable. It was the 93rd minute of Real Madrid versus Valencia at the Santiago Bernabeu; first versus second, the game many reckoned would decide this season's title.

A fascinating first half had given way to a stop-start second, during which Valencia took a 1-0 lead through a thumping header from Roberto Ayala. Madrid, lacking creativity without the suspended Zinedine Zidane, were on the verge of losing a first home match and Valencia were about to go top.

The Bernabeu had given up hope and been silently emptying for 15 minutes when referee Pedro Tristante Oliva struck. As Raul and Valencia centre-back Carlos Marchena went for an aimless punt, the official saw something nobody else had and blew his whistle.

The Madrid striker had backed into Marchena – whose arm came across Raul's shoulder – and fell on the floor. Marchena assumed Tristante Oliva had given a foul against Raul; instead, he gave a penalty, from which Luis Figo scored. Seconds later the referee blew the final whistle. Nobody could believe it. No Madrid players had even appealed; one admitted that his team-mates fell about laughing in the dressing-room afterwards.

With a little help from the ref, Madrid were still two points clear rather than a point down – a lead that grew to eight in the next two games. This made Carlos Queiroz's side hot favourites for the title, with Barcelona, unbeaten in six since Edgar Davids' arrival, emerging to challenge Valencia and Deportivo La Coruna for second place.

The aftermath was familiar. Valencia have suffered controversial decisions during their last four Bernabeu visits and president Jaime Orti was furious, raving: "This has become a complete joke. It's the same old story – we might as well stay at home."

Coach Rafa Benitez was also fuming. "You'll see a hundred like that and not one penalty, ever," he said. "Plus, the referee gave

Don't argue with me...referee Tristante Oliva is confronted by furious Valencia players after awarding Madrid the controversial penalty

one minute of additional time, then made it three. Sometimes I think we shouldn't have won the League [in 2002]; these days we have to do double to achieve half as much."

Thus was the Real Madrid robbery legend revived, the Government Team jibes reinforced. "I used to believe in referees' impartiality, but I'm not sure now," said midfielder David Albelda. "It was a political penalty," added team-mate Amedeo Carboni, while one Valencian columnist wrote: "Robbery, theft, hands up...look in your dictionary, you'll find mountains of synonyms to explain last night. At the Bernabeu they know more about that than anyone else – about robberies, that is, not synonyms."

Eye of a storm

Yet what made Tristante Oliva's timing so impeccable wasn't just the moment or even the game but the circumstances. It was an extremely bad day to give a controversial penalty to Madrid, one with all the ingredients to feed the black legend.

A day when Orti and Valencian journalists were abused by Madrid fans, when Valencia's team coach was stoned, when the directors' box was packed with politicians, including Madrid-supporting Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar. Above all, a day that closed a week in which Madrid and referees were at the eye of a storm after a Spanish Cup semi-final clash between Zinedine Zidane and Sevilla hardman Pablo Alfaro.

Zidane went in hard and high on Alfaro, who seemed to dig a forearm into his back. Zidane responded with a slap, Alfaro went down theatrically and Zidane was sent off. So incensed was Madrid sporting director Jorge Valdano that he went down to the referee's dressing-room at half-time to have words.

So, when Sevilla had Javi Navarro sent off in the second half, they were convinced it was a case of evening things up, bowing to Valdano's wishes. "It's pathetic, Valdano acted like a Mafioso," said Alfaro scathingly, offering just the first of many, many shots.

Such a free-for-all did it become that even Atletico Madrid president Jesus Gil waded in, saying: "If I had done what Valdano did they'd have electrocuted me. Madrid is the government's team and [Madrid president] Florentino Perez is God."

Although Zidane's slap was clear, pro-Madrid daily *AS*'s front page declared him "INNOCENT!" and, with Valencia coming up, Madrid tried to delay his ban on the basis of a clean record and Alfaro's provocation. Alfaro couldn't believe it. "You'd think the *galacticos* pissed perfume," he sighed.

Madrid invariably fail in such requests because the disciplinary committee is terrified of being accused of the old crime of *Madridismo* – and this was no exception. That rejection led Madrid fans to carry huge banners to the Valencia game describing the committee as "a disgrace" and accusing Valencia and Sevilla of being "cry babies", thus upping the tension still further.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the divide, Madrid were reinforced as the Government Team, favoured by referees. And it was about to get worse. What a day to give a penalty, indeed.

In the middle of the storm, Tristante Oliva's decision was, as *Marca's* front cover put it: "The last thing we needed." The debate raged on and on. Even the magazine of the Archbishopric of Valencia got in on the act, asking: "Can we find it in our hearts to forgive Tristante?" A group of 250 Valencia fans gave the answer when they decided to sue the referee for "moral damage".

Alone in supporting the referee's decision, *AS* rather self-interestedly took it upon themselves to prove it was a penalty, backed by a photo-board. That just made matters worse.

"Marchena doesn't go for the ball, instead he holds Raul back," *AS* wrote – yet the sequence showed his eyes fixed on the ball. And while Marchena's arm did cut across Raul's shoulder, the sequence was misleading: taken straight on, it didn't show Raul leaning in. Nor did it reveal the origin of the contact.

The judo expert's view

More was to come. *AS* visited a judo expert who helpfully defined Marchena's challenge as an *Ushiro-nage*; then, taking advantage of Spain's referees' meeting in Madrid, succeeded in quoting referees' technical director Manuel Diaz Vega saying it was a penalty.

A clumsier move would be hard to imagine – the referee's committee had never made an announcement on a specific decision, but doing so now prompted yet more calls of pro-Madrid bias.

Diaz Vega, nicknamed Darth Vader, was privately criticised by other referees and during one debating session was confronted by referee Eduardo Iturralde Gonzalez. The two ended up acting out the penalty on stage before Spain's entire refereeing corps. Yet despite the dissent, Diaz Vega, egged on by *AS*, announced a crusade against penalty-area pushing, shoving and tugging.

The consequences? Cleaner matches, fewer fouls? No: a weekend in which Spain's footballers, especially Valencia's still-furious players, dived more than ever. One Atletico player revealed that he had been told to look for penalty-area contact and fall, while Valencia winger Vicente inadvertently admitted playing the same game. "We were concentrating on the ref more than on our football," he said, more revealingly than he probably intended.

● Benito Floro resigned as manager of Villarreal, saying he could no longer motivate his players, whom he accused of not giving their all. "It's now up to them to prove that I was the problem, not them," he said. "The only way they can do that is to start playing well again."

● Betis winger Joaquin, tipped to be Real Madrid's next *galactico*, revealed the secret of his success in sports daily *Marca* – he was breast-fed until the age of six, even at half-time in his childhood matches and in front of his friends. "It's a bit odd," Joaquin admitted with devastating understatement. "I used to be really, really embarrassed, but it's had its benefits. The doctor said that's why I have grown up strong and injury-free."

Milking the moment...Joaquin

'This has become a complete joke. It's the same old story – we might as well stay at home'

Valencia president Jaime Orti

Policeman's knock

Tax and finance authorities move in as clubs come under scrutiny again

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

FEBRUARY 2004 PROVED to be yet another month when Italian football made front-page headlines for all the wrong reasons. Ongoing concerns about the chronic and deep-rooted financial crisis underlying the game were dramatically highlighted when the *Guardia di Finanza*, Italy's tax and finance police, staged 53 raids on the administrative offices of all Serie A, Serie B and some Serie C clubs as well as on those of the Italian Football Federation and Football League.

A variety of factors prompted this unprecedented action. Firstly, there was the dossier presented to the police by Giuseppe Gazzoni Frascara, owner of Serie A side Bologna. He argued that Italian football is not being played on a level playing field for the good reason that some clubs pay all their taxes, pay their players punctually and file correctly-audited balance sheets while others do not. Those who "fiddle the books", claimed the Bologna boss, have an unfair advantage on their rivals since their tax evasion, irregular player wage payment and fraudulent book-keeping leaves them with greater resources to spend on buying the best players.

Even before Gazzoni Frascara presented his document, the police had been alerted by two other events. The Rome Public Prosecutor's office is investigating suspected fraud regarding financial guarantees presented last summer by Roma, Napoli, Cosenza and Spal before their enrolment in this season's First, Second and Third Division championships. In the case of Roma, the club provided guarantees that subsequently proved to be fraudulent.

The other warning had come via ongoing bankruptcy probes into the collapses of dairy giant Parmalat, owners of Parma football club, and agro/food products company Cirio, once controlled by

'Those who fiddle the books have more to spend on top players'

● Juventus vice-president Roberto Bettega led the tributes to the late John Charles. "We mourn a great champion and a great man," Bettega said. "He interpreted the spirit of Juventus in the best possible manner and represented the sport in the best and purest manner. We are thinking of his wife Glenda and the children of the *Gigante Buono* [Gentle Giant], who we will never forget."

Salute...Juve pay their respects

Forza Roma... Totti and Cassano keep an attack moving during the 4-1 win at Parma

former Lazio boss Sergio Cragnotti. In particular, the transfers of Juan Sebastian Veron (from Parma to Lazio in 1999 for £21million), of Sergio Conceicao (Lazio to Parma in 2000, £11m) and Matias Almeyda (Parma to Lazio in 2000, £15m) have come under close scrutiny.

Nor were misgivings about Lazio much helped by the investigators' discovery that Cragnotti "diverted" (misappropriated) £7m-worth of Cirio funds to pay the players' wages and bonuses in the wake of their Serie A title win in 2000.

Creative accounting

It remains to be seen just what further irregularities police will discover from the van-loads of documents they took away following their raids. Before they open a single balance sheet, however, just about any economic analyst could tell them that Italian football is in a crisis. For instance, the collective debt of the 18 clubs currently in Serie A is estimated at £1.38billion.

Of those clubs, only four – Juventus, Empoli, Chievo and Reggina – returned a profit for the financial year ending June 2003, while Lazio lost £87m, Roma £75m, Parma £55m and Milan £21m. (Player wages account for 85 per cent of the clubs' running costs.) On top of that, by last June Lazio owed the tax man £85m, Roma £48m and Inter, Juventus and Milan about £15m each.

Worse still, underpinning these heavily indebted balance sheets are some 'creative accountancy' practices. For instance, has any *World Soccer* reader ever heard of the following players – Musacco, Panarelli and Paoletti? In recent Roma accounts, these three are collectively 'valued' at £16.7m even though they moved on to Grosetto and Taranto for a total of £86,000.

Recent Inter and Milan accounts also show signs of similar fiscal imagination at work. Inter allegedly sold Ticli and Varaldi to Milan for £5m, while Milan parted with Ronny and Matteo to Inter for £4m. It's a pity few of us have had the pleasure of seeing these multi-million-pound talents in action. Pity, too, that their real value, collectively, probably amounts to less than £70,000.

Then, too, there was the Serie A club that sold 26 players one week and then mysteriously bought them back shortly afterwards. Certainly, for at least a week or two, the club's books were looking good. Another regular trick concerns the registering of transfers. Often transfer sales (income) are written into the balance sheet immediately while purchases (outgoings) are not written in until the following season. The reality is that a whole host of 'balance sheet malpractices' have become commonplace, with a view to presenting the most florid financial status possible.

For at least one club, heavily indebted Roma, the timing of the police raids could not have been worse. They came in the same week that owner Franco Sensi appeared to be on the point of concluding the sale of the club to Nafta Moskva, a Russian petrol import/export conglomerate.

Even if they had their misgivings, Roma fans were already preparing to welcome the Russian sugar daddies who were reportedly willing to splash out £280m to buy the club and wipe out the £170m debts.

Ironically, Roma's financial problems have been highlighted at a moment when the club has been playing some of there very best football. A 4-0 home defeat of champions Juventus (bettered only by a 5-0 crushing of Juve 73 years ago), a 6-0 demolition job on hapless Siena and an impressive 4-1 win at Parma all underlined emphatically that no side is currently playing better in Serie A.

In any normal season, Roma's form would see them lead the way. Yet such has been the form shown by European champions Milan that Roma are doing well to hold on to Milan's coat-tails. By the end of February, the San Siro side had played 10 Serie A games in 2004, winning nine and drawing one.

Lippi's fighting talk

While Roma were doing their best to stay the pace, the Old Lady of Turin was showing some unusual and worrying wrinkles. In the aftermath of that 4-0 drubbing in Rome, Juventus coach Marcello Lippi came out fighting.

"I tell you now, if anyone thinks that we are about to throw in the towel, they can forget it," he declared. "Maybe, in the end, we won't win the title this year but we will be there fighting it out right down to the last day. Things do not end here."

Brave words – but Lippi knows all too well that he has serious problems, above all in defence. By the end of February his side had conceded 25 goals, as against 13 by Milan and 10 by Roma.

Lippi may be able to resolve his problems but, in the meantime, he and colleague Fabio Capello at Roma must hope that Milan lose some vital energy in the course of a sustained Champions League run. At the moment, Milan mercy is in short supply – as struggling crosstown rivals Inter found out in the second Milan derby of the season. Having somewhat fortuitously found themselves 2-0 up at half-time, Inter failed to build on their strong position, collapsing in the face of a second-half Milan comeback which saw the 'home' team win 3-2.

After five Serie A defeats in 2004 (Parma, Empoli, Udinese, Milan and Brescia) plus an Italian Cup semi-final elimination by Juventus (on penalties), it would seem only a sustained UEFA Cup run can save Inter's bacon. However, given their difficulties in dealing with Sochaux (they squeezed through on away goals after drawing 2-2 on aggregate), even that would seem far beyond them.

Sentimental journey

The country has been thriving on 50-year-old memories and Aachen's giantkilling win over Bayern

NICK BIDWELL in Munich

WHO SAID NOSTALGIA is not what it used to be? It is certainly alive and well in Germany, where memories of West Germany's first World Cup triumph have very much caught the public imagination.

It is half a century since the legendary Sepp Herberger's side came from 2-0 down to record a shock 3-2 victory over hot favourites Hungary in the Final in Berne. But the commercial spin-offs have known no bounds. Commemorative books, magazines and watches have proved popular, replica 1954 shirts have been flying out of sports shops, while movie-goers have flocked to see *Das Wunder von Bern* (The Miracle of Berne), based on a young boy's hero-worship of Helmut Rahn, the right-winger whose two goals helped upset the Mighty Magyars.

Those who like to take their football with a large dollop of sentimentality would also have appreciated Second Division promotion hopefuls Alemannia Aachen's sensational 2-1 German Cup quarter-final victory over mighty Bayern Munich, a game in which last season's Double winners plumbed the depths.

This was no giantkilling based on the odd successful counter-attack and a lengthy rearguard action. Alemannia outplayed Bayern for long periods, taking the lead through Stefan Blank's long-range effort and refusing to buckle following Michael Ballack's headed equaliser against the run of play on the stroke of half-time.

Put your shirt on me...an ecstatic Eric Meijer celebrates his winner against Bayern Munich

Based in a Rhineland frontier town on the border with Belgium and Holland, the *Aachener* continued to press and finally received their due nine minutes from time. Dutchman Eric Meijer, formerly with Liverpool and Hamburg, headed home to put Aachen back on the German football map 34 years after they were last in the Bundesliga.

"I always thought that anything was possible on our home ground," said Alemannia coach Jorg Berger, who fled the old German Democratic Republic in 1979 to take up coaching posts with Eintracht Frankfurt, Koln and Schalke, among others. "On the basis of all our chances, especially in the first half, we deserved to win."

Beckenbauer despair

For Bayern it was a night of utter humiliation. Not one of their players seemed prepared to battle, defensively they were sloppy throughout and in midfield they came off second-best to an Aachen quartet featuring ex-Bielefeld player Angsar Brinkmann on the right and former Monchengladbach and Panathinaikos playmaker Kalle Pflipsen. "It can't get any worse than this," lamented Bayern president Franz Beckenbauer. Those seven words said it all.

Aachen will play host to near neighbours Gladbach in the semis, while another Second Division club, Lubeck, travel to Werder Bremen, who continue to set the pace in the Bundesliga.

Werder have accustomed their fans to post-winter break slumps in recent years. But there has been no sign of them coming off the rails in 2004. Victorious in three of their first four games since the restart, Werder are enjoying the rub of the green, too, winning 2-1 at Gladbach thanks to a late goal from skipper Frank Baumann and then needing a 93rd-minute penalty to see off Kaiserslautern 1-0.

Werder were recently dealt a blow when influential Hungarian midfielder Krisztian Lisztes refused to sign a new contract and will now walk away on a Bosman free in June. A much more welcome development was the decision of much-improved young Croat striker Ivan Klasnic to extend his contract to 2008. Werder general manager Klaus Allofs is clearly making headway in his plans for next season. He has struck a deal with Sao Paulo to bring in central or left-sided defender Gustavo Nery, and then confirmed speculation that Kaiserslautern and Germany striker Miroslav Klose will be arriving in the summer.

The January transfer window came and went without anyone really noticing. Hannover were by far the most active, recruiting Portuguese defender Abel Xavier from Liverpool, Russian midfielder Vladimir But (Freiburg), Serb marksman Stanko Svitlica (Legia Warsaw) and United States front-runner Clint Mathis (MetroStars). But by far the biggest splash was made by Stuttgart, who for the paltry sum of £1.6 million bought the brilliant Swiss attacking midfielder Hakan Yakin from Basle (see panel).

● There can be no doubt about the creativity and eye for goal of Hakan Yakin, signed by Stuttgart from Basle during the winter break. But he does tend to march to a different drum and can be hard to handle. Last summer, his move to Paris Saint-Germain lasted just three weeks after he went home to Switzerland for an unauthorised hernia operation.

Indeed, the switch to Stuttgart was not without snags. Fenerbahce claimed Yakin had signed a pre-contract with them in December and threatened to take the matter to FIFA. Yakin denied this yet later appeared to admit he had put pen to paper, offering his excuses to Fener. Fortunately for him the Turks let the matter drop.

"I don't belong to the good guys," says Yakin. "Maybe I go too far sometimes but that's me. I achieved all I could in Switzerland, now I'm hungry for more success with Stuttgart."

Living on the edge...Hakan Yakin

Goodbye Gerets

At about the same time as Yakin was signing his three-and-a-half year contract with Stuttgart, over at Kaiserslautern, coach Eric Gerets was clearing his desk after being sacked by club president Rene C Jaggi. With the team in and around the relegation zone for most of the campaign, Gerets had been walking a tightrope for some time. But it required a dramatic *volte-face* from Jaggi to force the fall.

Just a couple of weeks previously, the president had applauded Gerets' decision to axe three allegedly disruptive players – Thomas Hengen, Markus Anfang and Steffen Freund – from his first-team squad. He also swore he would stick by Gerets, saying: "We'll see it through together until the end of the season. No ifs or buts." The curse of the vote of confidence was soon to strike, however, with Gerets making way for Austrian Kurt Jara, who himself was fired by Hamburg earlier in the season.

"This is a black day for both Kaiserslautern and myself," said Jaggi. "Eric Gerets was a friend and did a tremendous job to keep us in the Bundesliga last season. But our latest defeat [2-1 at 1860 Munich] left us with the conclusion that a change of coach was needed as soon as possible. We were no longer convinced Eric could save us from relegation.

"Kurt Jara was the candidate who best fitted our criteria. He knows the Bundesliga well and has been in this sort of relegation situation before. In his first season at Hamburg [2001-02] he guided them out of the danger zone. He can lead us out of the depths too."

How Kaiserslautern could use a midfield general of the calibre of their late, great former skipper Fritz Walter. Oh no. We're back to those heroes of 1954 again.

'I always thought anything was possible on our home ground. We deserved to win'

Alemannia Aachen coach Jorg Berger

Big one – or bust?

Winning the Champions League could be the only thing that keeps Ranieri in the Chelsea job

KEIR RADNEDGE in London

CLAUDIO RANIERI IS the most engaging manager in the Premiership. He arrived as a comparative unknown in September 2000 with a CV that spoke more of ambition than attainment at Cagliari, Napoli, Fiorentina, Valencia and Atletico Madrid. Also, the Italian spoke no English so fans and media had little guide to the personality guiding one of the country's most high-profile but most underachieving clubs.

Ranieri arrived at a difficult time for Chelsea, still then, of course, under the idiosyncratic leadership of Ken Bates. The finances of the Stamford Bridge redevelopment had caught up with the club and last season Ranieri had no money to spend on new players. It was thus no mean achievement to steer Chelsea to fourth place in the Premiership and into the Champions League.

Only on one account could Ranieri be criticised – for perpetually fiddling with the team line-up and his tactics, thus earning the nickname of 'Tinkerman'. Ranieri, however, turned the criticism around as he got to grips with the English language. Now he has adopted the nickname proudly. "Yes," he says, "I am the Tinkerman and this is because in football you can never achieve perfection. There is always something more you can do. You must always try to improve yourself as an individual or as a team."

Ranieri's English is a strange and entertaining mixture of our football cliches mixed up with Italian allusions which make for entertaining good sense even in the absence of grammatical logic. But it also offers him protection against some of the barbed questions of a story-hungry tabloid media.

Total dedication

The overall impression, however, is one of a dedicated football man who inspires enormous loyalty among his players and is both strong-willed and confident in his work. Ranieri certainly needs that self-security following the events of the past six months. He was as surprised as anyone when Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich emerged out of nowhere last summer to pay off the club's debts and buy an entire new team of international stars.

"Yes, in one way this was a manager's dream," says the Italian. "But it is not so easy in reality. In terms of pressure I have the worst job in the world. But I can still smile. I don't worry about it. Every time I prepare for a match I am told another manager wants my job. But I started my career managing an amateur team and I have worked hard to get where I am. This is why I have the experience to cope with bad situations. I do not expect us to win

Facing the future...the dugout gives Ranieri some tongue-in-cheek advice during Chelsea's narrow FA Cup victory at non-League Scarborough in January

'The Chelsea side Ranieri manages has been part-built by Eriksson'

anything this season and I have told the fans that. Great individuals do not make a great team overnight. We have to be patient."

But patience and football do not go together. Hanging over Ranieri all season has been the shadow not only of Arsene Wenger and his Arsenal Premier League pace-setters but that of Sven Goran Eriksson after the England coach was photographed last summer knocking on the front door of Abramovich's London mansion. The photographer who took what is now a famous picture did so just because this was the England manager out in town. Only a week later, when Abramovich's Chelsea takeover had been revealed, did its true significance emerge.

Since then speculation has been rife that Eriksson will succeed Ranieri after Euro 2004. The FA has offered Eriksson a new contract but no one seriously expects a decision until after the European finals. The latest rumour was sparked by reported comments from Zdenek Nehoda, agent of Pavel Nedved, claiming Eriksson had asked the European Footballer of the Year if he would be interested in playing for him at Chelsea next season. Eriksson denied it and the FA even went as far as contacting the BBC to refute the claim.

Roman coinage

What is not in dispute is that Eriksson's England contract runs to 2006 and that Abramovich has the money to buy it out. The FA would also save on its wage bill by replacing the Swede with a 'low-cost' Englishman, but that is a step too far.

The Eriksson connection to Abramovich is Pini Zahavi, the Israeli 'super agent' who is close to the coach and was hired by Abramovich to raid Real Madrid, Internazionale and Manchester United for players. Who advised Zahavi on which players to pursue? The answer is clear. Thus the team Ranieri manages has been part-built by Eriksson and includes several of his favourite young England players such as Frank Lampard and Joe Cole.

Ranieri is practised at shrugging off questions about his Chelsea future. He says: "It does not worry me. I have a big job every day and I have no time to look to the future. I get on very well with Mr Abramovich, we both want the same for Chelsea." The tranquil surface of the turbulent Chelsea waters was disturbed, however, when new chief executive Peter Kenyon arrived in February from Manchester United. Kenyon said the season would be "a failure" if Chelsea did not win at least one trophy. Suddenly, for the first time, Ranieri had been put under short-term pressure.

That pressure has increased. When Kenyon made his comments, Chelsea were competing for the Premiership, Champions League and FA Cup – and the Cup appeared the most likely escape route for Ranieri. Then two superb goals by Arsenal's Spanish acquisition Jose Antonio Reyes ended that dream. A week later the Gunners' Patrick Vieira and Edu effectively put an end to the Premiership vision.

Thus Ranieri's remaining chance of a trophy is to win the Champions League. Every match in European club football's most prestigious competition will now be 'the biggest' of his season.

All the time, of course, fans of assorted other clubs are hoping Chelsea complete their fall at all three fences. That, so the theory goes, would hasten Ranieri's departure from west London – and simultaneously make him the most popular manager…on the job market.

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Hero to zero

BRIAN HOMEWOOD in Rio de Janeiro

Rivaldo's career is in limbo after following coach Luxemburgo out of Cruzeiro

LESS THAN THREE months after winning the Brazilian championship for the first time and being touted as a model of good administration, Cruzeiro have fallen into disarray.

Coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo was fired after a clash with the Perrella brothers who run the club – Alvimar is president and Zeze the all-powerful vice-president of football; Rivaldo walked out the following day in solidarity. One day after that, Cruzeiro were hammered 5-3 by their bitter Belo Horizonte rivals Atletico Mineiro in a Minas Gerais state championship game.

Rivaldo, signed at the start of January after a miserable 18 months at Milan, had been at the club for 50 days during which he played 10 competitive matches and scored two goals. He was repeatedly jeered for his lacklustre performances.

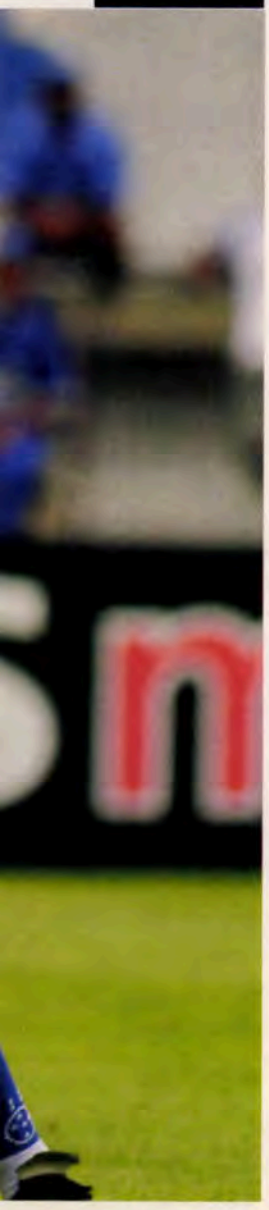
The double departure came with Cruzeiro halfway through their programme of matches in Group 3 of the Libertadores Cup and amid accusations that the directors had backtracked on the payment of bonuses for winning the Brazilian championship.

Initially, the players had been told that they would be paid by the end of December. Then, directors changed their minds and decided to divide payment into six monthly instalments. The real fun began when they did not even manage to pay the first of those instalments on time.

Captain and team inspiration Alex then complained of a bad atmosphere in the team camp. Trouble had been brewing since the end of last season when Cruzeiro decided to dispense with Colombian striker Victor Hugo Aristizabal and 36-year-old midfielder

'We shouldn't accept this kind of pressure'

Cruzeiro vice-president Zeze Perrella explains the decision to sack coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo



Quick exit...Rivaldo failed to impress in his few weeks at Cruzeiro and quit after coach Luxemburgo left

Zinho, two of the squad's most likeable and vibrant personalities.

In their place came the introverted Rivaldo and bad-tempered striker Guilherme, who formerly played for rivals Atletico Mineiro and is capable of disrupting the most harmonious of dressing-rooms.

During his Atletico days, Guilherme provided a fascinating insight into his temperament when he was filmed hacking down a teenager during a training session and then saying: "That'll teach you to dribble past me." During his days with Gremio, he was arrested after a drunken night on the town.

Quit threat backfires

Luxemburgo's dismissal came after he called for a meeting with the directors to discuss all this. During a heated discussion in the morning, he reportedly offered his resignation. He then attempted to backtrack in the afternoon, but the club decided to fire him.

Zeze Perrella then accused Luxemburgo of "emotional blackmail" for offering his resignation on the eve of the derby with Atletico Mineiro, and said the former Brazil coach had been trying to take control of the club.

"We thought this was psychological pressure...and that we shouldn't accept this type of pressure," Perrella said, adding that Luxemburgo had made a similar threat last year before the match that Cruzeiro needed to win to clinch the title.

"Vanderlei wanted to be involved in all areas of the club, and that wasn't comfortable for us," Perrella added. "The relationship wasn't as good as last year and we thought it was time for him to leave."

Luxemburgo has made habit of leaving clubs in acrimonious circumstances. Santos fans have never forgiven him for the way he abandoned their club in mid-1997 after accepting an offer to take charge of Corinthians. He has been pelted with coins and greeted with chants of "mercenary" on every return trip to the Vila Belmiro.

Palmeiras supporters were equally furious when he walked out on their club after just two matches of the Brazilian championship in 2002 to join Cruzeiro, having earlier cajoled the directors into making a number of signings for the campaign. Palmeiras were subsequently relegated (they won promotion at the first attempt) and some of their fans still blame Luxemburgo for their team's fate.

The coach's two years in charge of Brazil began well with Copa America victory in 1999, but his reign went into rapid decline once the 2002 World Cup qualifiers began. In addition to his constant chopping and changing of the team, Luxemburgo was hit by accusations from a former business associate that he had taken commission on the sale of players when he was a club coach.

In the end he was fired after Brazil lost 2-1 to nine-man Cameroon in the quarter-finals of the Sydney Olympics.

Future unknown

Rivaldo's future, meanwhile, remains a mystery, with Qatar and Japan being mentioned as likely destinations. Such a move, however, would almost certainly wreck his chances of keeping his place in the national team.

Although it seemed unlikely he would join another Brazilian club, his sudden walkout did not provoke the barrage of criticism that might have been expected.

Rivaldo shuns the limelight to the same degree that the likes of Ronaldo attract it, and many see him as a rare example of dignity in the modern game.

Rivaldo, it should be remembered, refused to allow the then presidential candidate Ciro Gomes to be photographed alongside him before the infamous home friendly against Paraguay that had been arranged to celebrate their 2002 World Cup win two months earlier.

Jose Trajano, columnist for the sports daily *Lance*, said: "In the heavy atmosphere of football, where personal interests and vanity always come first, the World Cup winner displayed a rare and praiseworthy attitude.

"Solidarity, not just in football but in all activities, is something that is disappearing with time. On the contrary to what many people said, he left with his head held high."

Back at Corinthians...Oliveira

● Cruzeiro were one of five leading clubs to undergo a coaching change in as many days – and this is before the Brazilian championship has got under way.

Corinthians coach Juninho Fonseca was first out the door and was quickly replaced by Oswaldo de Oliveira, who returned for his third stint at the club. Oliveira led Corinthians to the Brazilian championship in 1999 and was in charge when they also won FIFA's one and only Club World Championship the following year.

Ivo Wortmann was fired by Goias, after their directors judged that his record of 10 wins in 12 games simply wasn't good enough. Tite was replaced by Muricy Ramalho at Libertadores Cup qualifiers Sao Caetano.

The final victim was Valdir Espinosa, who left Fluminense after only two months when he found out that the club had been trying to hire Luxemburgo behind his back.

Espinosa, in fact, had one of the most unenviable tasks in the country as he was brought in to manage a team containing notorious troublemakers Romario and Edmundo.

As if that were not enough, the club then signed goalkeeper Danrlei, yet another player with a long history of disciplinary problems. He was one of 13 players signed in 50 days as the club went on an extraordinary spending spree.

Roman conqueror

Roma's captain and talisman is in the form of his life. Europe beware, says Paddy Agnew

DURING THE ITALIAN general election campaign of three years ago, centre-right leader and current Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi launched a nationwide series of simple but brilliantly effective posters. One of them carried the enticing message "Meno Tasse Per Tutti" (lower taxes for everyone).

To the delight of many, a bright wag in the anti-Berlusconi camp substituted an 'o' for the 'u' in the last word of the slogan, leaving us with the engaging "Lower Taxes For Totti". No matter where you are in Italy and no matter what the context, it is hard to ignore the country's most popular footballer.

Renowned not only for his immense talent but also for his loyalty to club Roma and the Eternal City itself, Francesco Totti has nevertheless long been the butt of Italian comics. They portray him as the typical modern Roman, i.e. a rather rude, ignorant and insensitive flash Harry. Last summer, prompted by a jocular remark made to a friend, Totti opted to put his 'comic' fame at the services of a good cause. Helped by friends, he gathered together as many jokes about himself as he could find and published them in a book, suitably entitled "All The Jokes About Totti, Gathered By Me".

By January, the book had sold more than a million copies, thus realising £350,000 both for UNICEF and for Rome city council's 'Caring For The Elderly' service. All of a sudden, the 'ignoramus' is no longer just a pretty footballer; rather, he has become Italian sport's leading philanthropist.

Before Italy's 2-2 draw with the Czech Republic in a February friendly in Palermo, Sicily, Totti was part of an Italian team delegation that visited the city's Paglierelli prison. To the delight of 200 inmates, Totti offered to tell a few of the jokes from his book.

Seeing the funny side

The player does not hide his amusement at this transformation in his public image, telling weekly news magazine *L'Espresso* recently: "Everybody now says that I am witty and funny, where before they called me rude and ignorant."

At 27 years of age, it could be that Totti's time has come. He has no hesitation in describing himself as someone blessed by fortune, adding: "I have an infinite passion for football and I also make money playing it. Apart from having good health, which is the most important thing of all, this is a very great, good fortune."

Certainly, Totti's physical and mental maturity is such that he is currently playing the best football of his life. In the past, there have been those (especially in Anglo-Saxon parts) who felt Totti was a 'poseur', a player full of pretty tricks who went missing when the going got tough. To some extent, Totti provided those critics with plenty of ammunition. For example, during the critical springtime campaign in Roma's 2001 title-winning season, he appeared to feel the pressure, regularly and profitably being replaced by Japanese playmaker Hidetoshi Nakata.

This season, things look very different. Totti has not only been treating us to the full range of his sumptuous skills against the likes of relegation battlers Empoli and Siena but also against reigning champions Juventus. Totti was at the heart of Roma's 4-0 rout of the Old Lady at the Stadio Olimpico in early February, scoring from the penalty spot but more importantly prompting and setting things up for team-mate Antonio Cassano.

Blessed with a quick-silver footballing intelligence, Totti has arguably no equal in modern soccer when it comes to laying on the first time, first touch 50-yard through ball to a striker. His overall reading of the game, his brilliant passing and his penalty-kick skills (remember that cheeky little dinked one in the Euro 2000 semi-final shoot-out against Holland) have all been long-established. In recent seasons, too, Totti has been a consistently high goalscorer, bagging 14 for Roma in the League last season and 13 in the first 22 games this term.

It is almost superfluous to say that Totti is passionate about Roma. I remember a visit to the club's Trigoria training ground a couple of seasons back for some TV interviews. Halfway through one of the interviews, with Brazilian Cafu, we were rudely interrupted by Totti, who had leaned out of the clubhouse recreation room to shout abuse at the youth team of loathed crosstown rivals Lazio as they arrived to play their Roma counterparts. Totti is a *romanista* through and through, and as such it comes as no surprise to hear him say that the trophy he would most like to win with his club is the Champions League.

Immediate objectives

That success will have to wait for the future. For 2004, Totti has no hesitation in listing three other imposing objectives – the Serie A title, the Euro 2004 title and the European Player of the Year award.

Winning the Serie A title is one thing, but most neutral observers would argue that item three on the Totti 'wish list' follows on from item two. In other words, win Euro 2004 with Italy and you have a much better chance of winning the European player award.

Totti admits that he goes into this summer's finals doubly motivated. Not only are there the bitter memories of Italy's 2002 World Cup washout but there is also the even more painful memory of that last-gasp golden-goal defeat by France in the Euro 2000 Final in Rotterdam.

Totti said recently: "We've simply got to atone for that World Cup failure as well as wiping out the bitter finish to Euro 2000. If we were unlucky in Rotterdam, you have to concede that we all handled the World Cup badly, the staff, the coach, the players, we were all responsible...Right now, we've got a huge desire to get out there and do it for Italy."

Football purists might argue that Totti carries a third, equally important leitmotif into this summer. Namely that he, like all the great players of the past, needs one splendidly successful tournament to finally and fully establish himself as one of world football's greatest talents.

Euro 2004 could be the event.

FACT FILE

Club Roma
Country Italy
Born September 27, 1976, in Rome
International debut October 1998, v Switzerland
International caps 38 (6 goals)
Honours Italian League 2001

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Reyes and shine

Arsenal's new star talks to Kevin Palmer

WORLD SOCCER: What are your first impressions of Arsenal?
JOSE ANTONIO REYES: The quality of this club really impresses me. The training facilities are first-class and the people who have helped me settle in have made this a wonderful experience so far.

Why did you feel the time was right to accept the offer from Arsenal?
They have a reputation for being the best team in England and their ambition is to get even better. Also, one of the main reasons I joined Arsenal is because Arsene Wenger has a reputation for taking young players and turning them into something special. Guys like Vieira and Anelka progressed under him, and hopefully he can help me now.

So what do you think of Arsene Wenger so far?
I am sure that Mr Wenger will help me. I see him as a great manager and a very honest person. I'm sure we can be good for each other. He seems to be the type of manager who you can talk to if there is a problem, and that is what I like about him.

There has been some surprise in Spain that you are being used as a centre-forward. Are you happy playing there?
I see myself naturally as a second striker. I will not be the front player on my own and can play in wide positions, but at this moment I'm not in a position to say where I want to play. All I want is to get into the team and show what I'm capable of.

Are you confident of forging a good partnership with Thierry Henry?
We have a saying in Spain that certain players are *galacticos*, from another planet, and Henry is in that category. He would be a star in any era, and it will be great to play with him and all the great players at Arsenal. It would be wonderful if I can form a good partnership with Henry. I heard so much about him and expected him to be something incredible, and now I see why people are talking about him. He is a very special player.

Were you surprised that the Sevilla fans were so angry when the club agreed to sell you?
It was the craziest week of my life, but as I said at the time, I was happy and sad to be leaving Seville. All I would like to say to the Sevilla fans is that I will wear your shirt again one day and I thank them for their support.

You were left out of the Spain squad for the friendly against Peru in February. Are you still hopeful of being involved in Euro 2004?
Playing Champions League football is a big step for me and I am hopeful that will help me make a point to the international manager. I want to be there with Spain in the summer, but I know we have so many great players looking to get into the squad. I am still young so there will be other tournaments, but I'm impatient and want to play for Spain now.

What will you miss about Seville?
The weather is different here and I will miss my friends, obviously, but my family are coming with me to England and I don't anticipate having any problems adapting to the game in this country or living in London. I have been looking for a new house, but maybe I will find where I want to live for the next six months first. Then I can take time to consider something more permanent. This will be a great adventure for me and my family.

Are you concerned that English defenders will target you physically?
That may be the case, but I am confident that I can cope with this. Anyone who comes from Seville has confidence, and I am no different. I have belief in my ability and have no doubts that I can overcome any problems that may lie ahead.

Who were your idols when you were growing up?
The guys I looked up to when I was a kid were Maradona and Cruyff, but there was never one idol for me. I like to take bits and pieces from all the great stars and try to put that into my game.

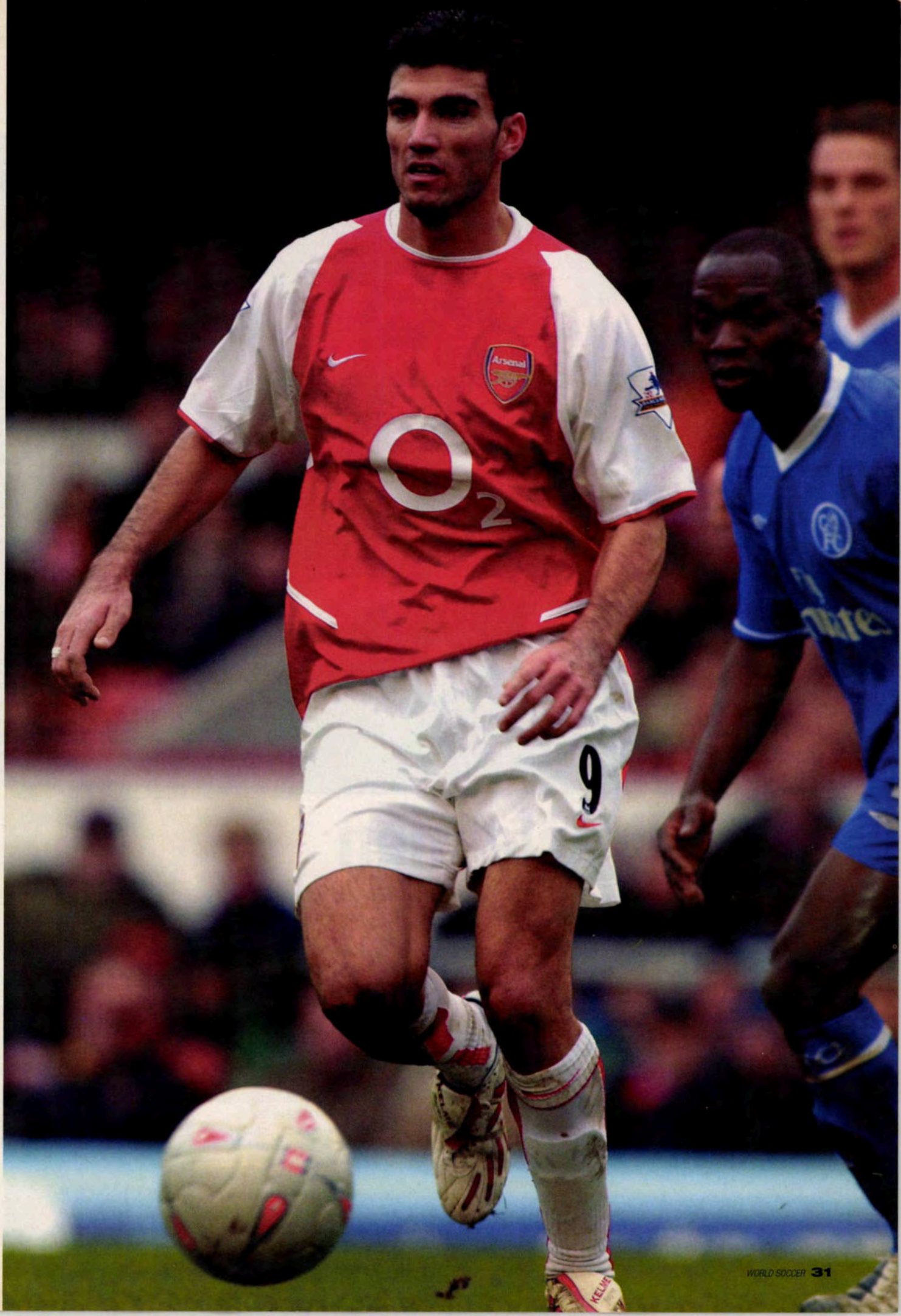
What are your earliest football memories?
I started playing when I was seven and things just went on from there. My father was a player who had a lot of ability, but never quite reached the top, so maybe I owe my talent to him. I never believed I would be good enough to be a professional, but I know I am lucky to have been blessed with this talent and I have to make the most of it.

'Wenger has a reputation for turning young players into something special. Hopefully he can help me'

Jump for joy...Reyes scores for Arsenal during their 2-1 FA Cup win over Chelsea in February

FACT FILE

Club Arsenal (Eng)
Country Spain
Born September 1, 1983, in Utrera
Previous club Sevilla
International debut September 2003, v Portugal
International caps 4 (2 goals)


Arsenal
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Shock and awe...Latvia stunned European football when they beat Turkey in the play-offs to reach the Euro 2004 finals

The miracle men

Nobody gave Latvia a chance of qualifying, but they will line up with Europe's finest in Portugal. Gavin Hamilton reports

IT WAS THE fairytale story of the Euro 2004 qualifiers. Nobody expected little Latvia, the Baltic nation where ice-hockey is king, to seriously challenge for a finals spot. Least of all the Latvians themselves.

Previous Latvian successes had been confined to the Baltic Cup, the three-nation summer tournament played against Lithuania and Estonia which the Latvians have won four times since the break-up of the Soviet Union.

In the qualifiers for the 2002 World Cup, Latvia picked up just four points and were even held to a draw by San Marino. It was a big disappointment after promising performances in the Euro 2000 qualifiers. Surprise away victories over Norway and Greece put the Latvians in the running for a play-off place before they dropped points against Albania and Georgia.

Few people gave Latvia much chance in a Euro 2004 qualifying group alongside Sweden, Poland, Hungary and San Marino. A home defeat by Poland in September 2003 made the Poles favourites to take the play-off place behind unbeaten leaders Sweden.

But a home defeat to the Swedes in their next game pegged Poland back, while Latvia put themselves in the frame to take the runners-up spot by beating Hungary 3-1 in Riga. They duly grabbed the play-off berth with a 1-0 victory in Stockholm – thanks to a Maris Verpakovskis goal and a Marcus Allback penalty miss. The victory over the Swedes is already the stuff of Latvian footballing legend and meant they finished just a point behind the group winners.

The subsequent, against-the-odds play-off victory against Turkey (1-0 in Riga, 2-2 in Istanbul, with Verpakovskis again the goal hero) made folk heroes of all the players – not to mention coach Aleksandrs Starkovs.

"It took even me by surprise, to be honest," says Gary Johnson, the Englishman who laid the foundations for Latvia's progress during two-and-a-half years as national coach between 1999 and 2001.

National hero...coach Starkovs

English experience...skipper Astafjevs

Johnson, now manager of English Third Division Yeovil Town, was succeeded by Starkovs, his assistant, in May 2001. The new man has continued to play a counter-attacking game and has benefited from the exodus of key players from Latvia to more challenging leagues in both western and eastern Europe.

"We set out to change the mentality of the players," says Johnson. "They needed to go out to try to win games, rather than going out and trying not to lose.

"They were about the only team still playing in the old Soviet way, with a sweeper. We had to encourage them to get over the halfway line and play a bit. They became a bit bolder and players like [Marian] Pahars and Verpakovskis came to the fore."

Johnson's English contacts proved useful in securing contracts for many of Latvia's key men.

"They were all playing for the same club, Skonto Riga, in a league of eight teams," says Johnson. "We needed to give them experience of the ups and downs of European football, to make them stronger as a group of people when they came back to play for their country."

Striker Pahars led the way, joining Southampton in March 1999, followed by Imants Bleidelis. Others moved to Arsenal (Igors Stepanovs), Crystal Palace (goalkeeper Alex Kolinko and winger Andrejs Rubins), Fulham (Andrejs Stolcers) and Bristol City (Vitalijs Astafjevs).

Johnson refutes suggestions that the failure of most of those players to hold down regular first-team places means the programme was not a success. "Stolcers did well at Fulham before they were promoted to the Premiership, and Kolinko did very well at Palace before his fallout with [manager] Trevor Francis." (Kolinko was hit by Francis after he was caught laughing in the dugout when Palace conceded a goal against Bradford.)

As for Stepanovs, his Arsenal career went into freefall after a humiliating 6-1 defeat by Manchester United. "He had one bad game marking Dwight Yorke at Old Trafford and he was never seen again," concedes Johnson. "Yet I saw him the previous week against Chelsea, and he was man of the match."

In any case, Stepanovs is now restoring his reputation in Belgium at Arsenal's nursery club Beveren, while Kolinko and Rubins are holding their own in the Russian League. Astafjevs is another doing well, with Admira Wacker in Austria.

For the national side Stepanovs has formed a strong partnership in central defence with veteran Mihails Zemlinskis, while Astafjevs, the captain, is one of the linchpins in a midfield that soaks up pressure before trying to put Pahars and Verpakovskis on the counter-attack.

Russian move...keeper Kolinko

Widemen Rubins and Bleidelis, who now plays in Denmark after failing to make the breakthrough at Southampton, are also crucial to the counter-attacking strategy.

Even with the newly-established exiles, the options open Starkovs are limited. "There are only eight teams in the Latvian League, each with a squad of 20, so that's around 160 players," Johnson acknowledges, "but about 50 are Russian, so you've only got around 100 players to choose from. It's miraculous what they've achieved."

The form of Pahars and Verpakovskis, the two outstanding individuals in the side, will be crucial in Portugal in June. Pahars is now back in the Southampton first-team after recovering from the injury that ruled him out of most of the Euro 2004 qualifying campaign. Verpakovskis must establish himself at Kyiv Dynamo following a winter transfer from Skonto.

Almost inevitably, Latvia have been drawn in the toughest group, alongside Holland, Germany and the Czech Republic. "Realistically, they've got no chance of winning Euro 2004," concedes Johnson, "but they could surprise a few people by nicking a goal and taking a point off someone.

"Just reaching the finals was their Final. But it's not a foregone conclusion that you can beat the Latvians. They could upset someone's championship."

THE SQUAD

	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Aleksanders KOLINKO	Rostov (Rus)	18.06.75	46	0
Aleksejs KRUCS	Metalurgs Liepaja	01.07.76	0	0
Andrejs PIEDELS	Skonto Riga	17.09.70	6	0
Andris VANINS	Torpedo-Metallurg (Rus)	30.04.80	4	0
DEFENDERS				
Olegs BLAGONADEZDINS	Alaniya Vladikavkaz (Rus)	16.05.73	62	0
Aleksanders ISAKOVS	Skonto Riga	16.09.73	40	0
Igors KORABLOVS	Ventspils	23.11.74	11	0
Maris SMIRNOVS	Ventspils	02.06.76	3	0
Igors N STEPANOVS	Beveren (Blg)	21.01.76	66	3
Arturs ZAKRESEVSKIS	Skonto Riga	07.08.71	44	0
Vladimirs ZAVORONKOVS	Ventspils	25.11.76	1	0
Mihails ZEMLINSKIS	Skonto Riga	21.12.69	92	8
Dzintars ZIRNIS	Metalurgs Liepaja	25.04.77	16	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Vitalijs ASTAFJEVS	Admira (Aut)	03.04.71	99	10
Imants BLEIDELIS	Viborg (Den)	16.08.75	76	8
Vladimirs KOLESNICENKO	Torpedo-Metallurg (Rus)	04.05.80	26	3
Juris LAIZANS	CSKA Moscow (Rus)	06.01.79	51	7
Valentins LOBANOVS	Skonto Riga	23.10.71	44	1
Jurgis PUCINSKS	Skonto Riga	01.03.73	14	0
Andrejs RUBINS	Shinnik (Rus)	26.11.78	51	6
Igors SEMJONOVS	Skonto Riga	03.07.85	5	0
FORWARDS				
Kristaps BLANKS	Skonto Riga	30.01.86	4	0
Viktors DOBRECOVS	Metalurgs Liepaja	09.01.77	15	0
Kristaps GREBIS	Metalurgs Liepaja	13.12.80	0	0
Gatis KALNINS	Skonto Riga	12.08.81	2	0
Girts KARLSONS	Shinnik (Rus)	07.06.81	3	0
Mihails MIHOLAPS	Alaniya Vladikavkaz (Rus)	24.08.74	26	2
Marian PAHARS	Southampton (Eng)	05.08.76	58	15
Andrejs PROHORENKOVS	Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr)	05.02.77	7	1
Vits RIMKUS	Ventspils	21.06.73	43	8
Andrejs STOLCERS	Fulham (Eng)	07.07.74	73	7
Maris VERPAKOVSKIS	Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr)	15.10.79	29	10

Caps and goals up to and including Latvia v Belarus (21.02.04)

Take-off...Georgi Yartsev is thrown aloft in celebration by his squad after guiding them to victory over Wales in the qualifying play-offs

Wanted: a sense of adventure

Nick Bidwell on the challenge facing Georgi Yartsev's men if they are to avoid another humiliating early exit

IF ONLY RUSSIA could play their Euro 2004 games in Moscow rather than Faro and Lisbon. Never daunted in their own backyard, they are often tentative far from their home base, and this overly-cautious approach has ensured an appalling record in tournaments since the old Soviet Union broke up in the early 1990s.

First-round exits from World Cup 2002, Euro 96 and USA 94 had their roots in a singular lack of ambition, and it is clear only greater belief and a more expansive approach will bring about the required improvement in Portugal this summer.

Despite losing classy Moscow Spartak midfielder Yegor Titov to a 12-month drugs ban, Russia certainly have the personnel to rise above the merely functional. Although Celta Vigo veteran playmaker Alexander Mostovoi is notoriously inconsistent, he can be a matchwinner with his deft touch and imaginative passing; right-winger Rolan Gusev and the brilliant young midfielder or attacker Marat Izmailov are both intricate dribblers of the highest order; while the sniping midfield runs of FC Porto's Dmitri Alenichev pose a real menace.

The onus will be on coach Georgi Yartsev, a former Moscow Spartak striker and manager, to give such talent its head. But with his side drawn alongside hosts Portugal and Spain in a tough group that also includes Greece, the danger is that the Russians may once again opt to play it safe.

Yartsev, who has also coached Dinamo Moscow and Rotor Volgograd, is talking a positive tournament. "While Portugal and Spain will be everybody's favourites to go through to the next round, we know how to play football too," he says. "This is a group of four technically proficient teams, and we are capable of doing well against any of our opponents.

"It's good we meet an extremely strong team like Spain in our opening game. We will be motivated to the maximum, and if we achieve a good result it will make our remaining games so much easier."

Powerful...Dmitri Bulykin

Solid...Vadim Evseev

The confidence of the 55-year-old is not baseless. He has done a fine job since taking over from Valeri Gazzayev last autumn. Those critics who thought it strange that a man who had been in semi-retirement for four years should be put in charge of the national team were soon retracting their comments.

When Yartsev arrived on the scene, Russian hopes of qualifying for Euro 2004 were slim. Embarrassing away losses to Albania and Georgia had left the team groggy, and time was running out. But Yartsev swiftly identified Russia's failings and instilled a new spirit into the squad. The new man led them into the play-offs thanks to a 1-1 draw away to the Republic of Ireland and home wins against Switzerland and Georgia, then oversaw the 1-0 win in Wales that sealed their place in the finals.

Pleasant journeys

The significance of those results in Dublin and Cardiff cannot be exaggerated. Here at last was a Russia team that travelled well, one prepared to battle it out on foreign soil. "We showed a lot of fighting qualities in the play-offs," says Yartsev. "The players realised this was an opportunity they could not afford to let slip. Russia have missed too many important events in recent years [France 98 and Euro 2000]."

Unbeaten in his first five games in charge, Yartsev fully deserved the two-year contract extension recently awarded to him by the federation. At a time when all seemed lost on the Russian front, he had galvanised the squad and proved himself to be a coach of impeccable instincts. Indeed, every one of his key decisions has worked out: the restoration of highly-experienced libero Victor Onopko to the captaincy; the recall of old guard players Mostovoi and Alenichev; and the fielding of powerful Dinamo Moscow striker Dmitri Bulykin, who scored four goals in his first five games.

Another wise move was to almost entirely base his defensive set-up on Lokomotiv Moscow knowhow, with Saturn's Onopko the exception. Keeper Sergei 'The Boss' Ovchinnikov, centre-back Sergei Ignashevich and full-backs Vadim Evseev and Dmitri Sennikov play together week in, week out, and are solid individually too.

Intricate...Rolan Gusev

Apart from the gap left by Titov's ban, Yartsev has some other problems that require quick answers. A priority will be to settle on a strike partner for Bulykin. He has several choices. He might push Izmailov further forward or go with young Zenit St Petersburg front-man Alexander Kerzhakov, a prolific scorer in the League in the past two years. The Russian revelation of the last World Cup, Dmitri Sychev, could also be considered. But first he must rediscover his form. After leaving Spartak for Marseille last year, he showed little of his scoring ability, touch and awareness and was often confined to the bench. Now he is back in Russia with Lokomotiv and desperately needs to get his train out of the station on time.

Dmitri Loskov, Russian Player of the Year in 2002 and 2003, is an equally testing conundrum. While the gifted Lokomotiv midfield general always delivers at club level, he has yet to make an impact for the national team.

The coach says his Euro 2004 squad will vary little from his previous selections. However, he insists the door is still ajar for late entrants. One might be Rubin Kazan midfielder Denis Boyarintsev, who showed up well last month when a home-based squad travelled East for games with Japan's Under-23s (1-1) and J.League club Shimizu S-Pulse (1-1), scoring in the latter match. Rostov striker Roman Adamov may have a chance too.

The Russian line-up in Japan was essentially a B team. No overseas stars, no players from Lokomotiv and Spartak – who were preparing for Champions League and UEFA Cup ties – and no help from CSKA Moscow, who refused to release their men.

More co-operation would be welcome in Russia's warm-up games with Bulgaria, Norway and Austria.

THE SQUAD

	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Igor AKINFEEV	CSKA Moscow	08.04.86	0	0
Viacheslav MALAFEEV	Zenit St Petersburg	04.03.79	1	0
Sergei OVCHINNIKOV	Lokomotiv Moscow	10.11.73	29	0
DEFENDERS				
Evgeni ALDONIN	Rotor Volgograd	22.01.80	11	0
Vadim EVSEEV	Lokomotiv Moscow	08.01.76	6	1
Sergei IGNASHEVICH	Lokomotiv Moscow	14.07.79	12	3
Gennadi NIZHEGORODOV	Lokomotiv Moscow	07.06.77	9	0
Victor ONOPKO	Saturn Ramenskoye	14.10.69	110	7
Dmitri SENNIKOV	Lokomotiv Moscow	24.06.76	11	0
Andrei SOLOMATIN	CSKA Moscow	09.09.75	13	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Dmitri ALENICHEV	FC Porto (Por)	20.10.72	49	6
Andrei ARSHAVIN	Zenit St Petersburg	29.05.81	3	1
Denis BOYARINTSEV	Rubin Kazan	06.02.78	0	0
Rolan GUSEV	CSKA Moscow	17.09.77	23	1
Marat IZMAILOV	Lokomotiv Moscow	21.09.82	15	0
Andrei KARYAKA	Kryliya Sovetov	01.04.78	15	3
Dmitri LOSKOV	Lokomotiv Moscow	12.02.74	11	0
Alexander MOSTOVOI	Celta Vigo (Spa)	22.08.68	63	13
Vladislav RADIMOV	Zenit St Petersburg	26.11.75	26	2
Alexei SMERTIN	Portsmouth (Eng)	01.05.75	37	0
Valeri YESIPOV	Rotor Volgograd	04.10.71	5	0
FORWARDS				
Roman ADAMOV	Rostov	21.06.82	0	0
Dmitri BULYKIN	Dinamo Moscow	20.11.79	5	4
Alexander KERZHAKOV	Zenit St Petersburg	27.11.82	15	3
Dmitri SYCHEV	Lokomotiv Moscow	26.10.83	13	3

Caps and goals up to and including Wales v Russia (19.11.03)

Tomas ROSICKY

Midfielder preparing to Czech out of Dortmund after Euro finals

FEELING RUN DOWN? Don't know where your next good performance is coming from? Follow the example of Czech midfield ace Tomas Rosicky and pick yourself up with a break in Sicily.

So often disappointing for his club Borussia Dortmund this season, Rosicky was back to his best in the Czechs' recent 2-2 friendly draw with Italy in Palermo. He combined high energy with thoughtful approach play and scored a late equaliser with a curling shot from the edge of the box. Here was the Rosicky who prompted Dortmund team-mate Christian Worns to describe him as "a more complete midfielder than Zidane".

Dortmund hoped Rosicky's fine display in Sicily would trigger a resurgence at club level, but he then broke an arm, ruling him out until April. Before that, the Czech could point to an appendicitis operation and a back problem in mitigation for his poor form, but he has been remarkably anonymous for someone of his gifts. The statistics do not make pleasant reading: only two goals in 11 starts before Christmas and not a single assist to his credit. No wonder German magazine *Kicker* mischievously drew attention to the fact that Dortmund had collected nearly twice as many points without him.

"The first half of this season has been my worst since coming here," admits Rosicky, an £8.3 million buy from Sparta Prague early in 2001. "I owe the fans something. I can't go on like this. I've wasted too many scoring chances and not been so creative. I've cost us points."

The Czechs will certainly need a fully-fit, in-form Rosicky in Portugal. Playing slightly deeper in central midfield than he does at Dortmund, his virtuosity on the ball and cute passing were essential ingredients in a Czech side that beat Holland to direct qualification for Euro 2004 and have now gone 20 matches unbeaten since November 2001.

Many experts look at a Czech attack built around the talents of Rosicky, European Player of the Year Pavel Nedved, striker Jan Koller and still sprightly wide-man Karel Poborsky and conclude they can make hay this summer. But Rosicky prefers a low-key stance.

"People are too quick to make us favourites," says the 23-year-old, Czech Footballer of the Year in 2001 and 2002. "I know we haven't lost for a long time and in the last few months we have beaten Holland and France [a 2-0 friendly win in Paris a year ago] and held Italy. But don't forget we did not even qualify for the last World Cup. We're strong going forward. But we have to make sure our defence is not put under too much pressure.

"We're in the group of death. Holland, Germany and ourselves are all good teams and anyone could go through. I don't want to underestimate Latvia either. As a Bundesliga player, the game against Germany will be extra special. I'm looking forward to it a lot already."

Collective Czech achievement in Portugal will not be Rosicky's only concern. He is also likely to be playing for a move. Dortmund's precarious finances – they have a £15m black hole in their budget this season – mean they are open to offers. Rosicky dismisses as "nonsense" talk of a £20m bid from Chelsea. But he knows the selling power of a European Championship, saying: "Nothing increases your value more than a good tournament."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
Country Czech Republic
Born October 4, 1980, in Prague
Previous clubs Kompressory Prague, Sparta Prague
International debut February 2000, v Republic of Ireland
International caps 32 (7 goals)
Honours Czech League 2000; German League 2002

Marcel DESAILLY

France's captain determined to keep Les Bleus burning in Portugal

FRANCE SEEM PRONE to captaincy controversies during the build-up to European Championships. Four years after ex-skipper Didier Deschamps felt compelled to boycott official press conferences following numerous articles describing him as over the hill, his good friend and successor Marcel Desailly now finds the same charge being levelled against him.

Deschamps eventually had the last word, leading *Les Bleus* to victory at Euro 2000. But it is by no means a certainty that Desailly will be wearing the captain's armband in Portugal.

As his critics are quick to point out, he is not in the strongest of positions. Desailly has been sidelined for long spells this season with hip and calf injuries, John Terry and William Gallas have emerged as Chelsea's first-choice central defensive pairing, and at 35, he has, not surprisingly, lost top gear.

Yet, brimming with the pride and steel that have underpinned an exceptional career, Desailly is adamant he still has much to offer his country. He proved it with an uncompromising display in France's recent 2-0 friendly win in Belgium. Although he had not played for Chelsea for over a month, he had no trouble lasting 90 minutes or subduing Wesley Sonck et al.

"I'm convinced I can still play at a high level," says France's most-capped player with 111 appearances to date. "If I didn't think so I would have given up the game by now. I don't believe my standards have fallen all of a sudden.

"I've become used to attacks since the 2002 World Cup. People said I was finished, they tried to break me. But I've kept going. I have less endurance but more experience. I compensate with my positioning and knowledge of the game.

"The situation at Chelsea is a new one for me. If all the central defenders are fit and in form, Claudio Ranieri has told me he prefers to go with the youngsters. The important thing is that I train hard and am ready to play when he needs me. I can't play 50 games a year any more. But if I play 30, that's almost the equivalent of a complete season in the French League."

France coach Jacques Santini will not want to change captains on the eve of a major tournament or discard a player who has rarely let him down. Yet he knows he cannot risk a rusty Desailly. Over the past year, Santini has dropped his skipper for Euro 2004 qualifiers against Malta and Israel but selected a far from match-fit player for the February trip to Brussels. "If it had been a competitive game against Belgium, I might have thought differently," said the coach. "On the other hand, I need all my leaders with me. Marcel has the chance to prove he is up to the challenge."

Since becoming France's captain in August 2000, Desailly's leadership qualities have often been called into question. For some, he is too haughty, while others maliciously argue he is more concerned with his portfolio of sponsorship deals than the good of the squad.

Such claims are essentially cheap shots. His desire is very much intact and no one wants to keep the *Bleu* flame burning more than him.

"I might have ended my international career after the last World Cup but I thought I could help us recover from the massive disappointment in South Korea," says Desailly, who has announced he will bid adieu to the national team after Euro 2004. "We have an excellent group of players and we are once again at ease with ourselves. Our confidence has returned."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Chelsea (Eng)
Country France
Born September 7, 1968, in Accra, Ghana
Previous clubs Nantes, Marseille, Milan (Ita)
International debut August 1993, v Sweden
International caps 111 (3 goals)
Honours World Cup 1998; European Championship 2000; Confederations Cup 2001, 2003; Champions League 1993, 1994; Italian League 1994, 1996; FA Cup 2000

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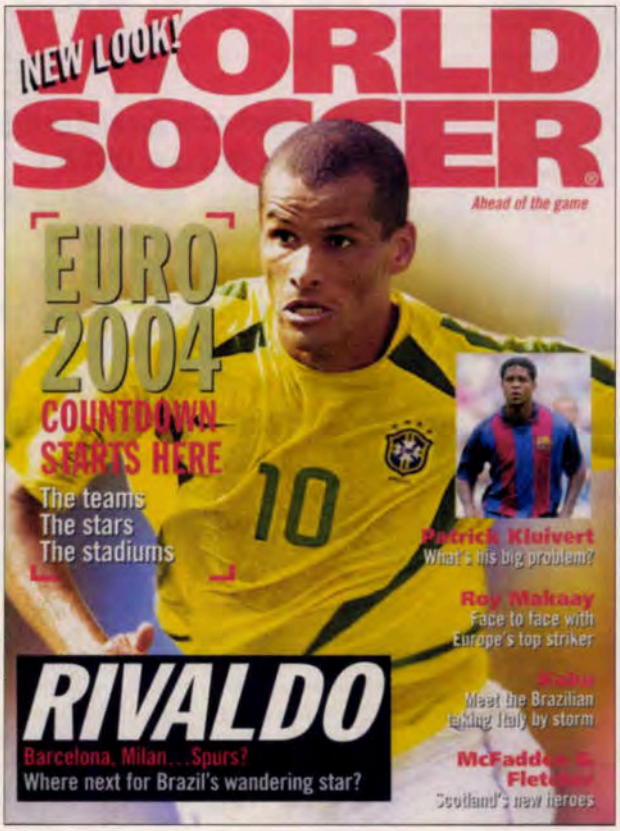

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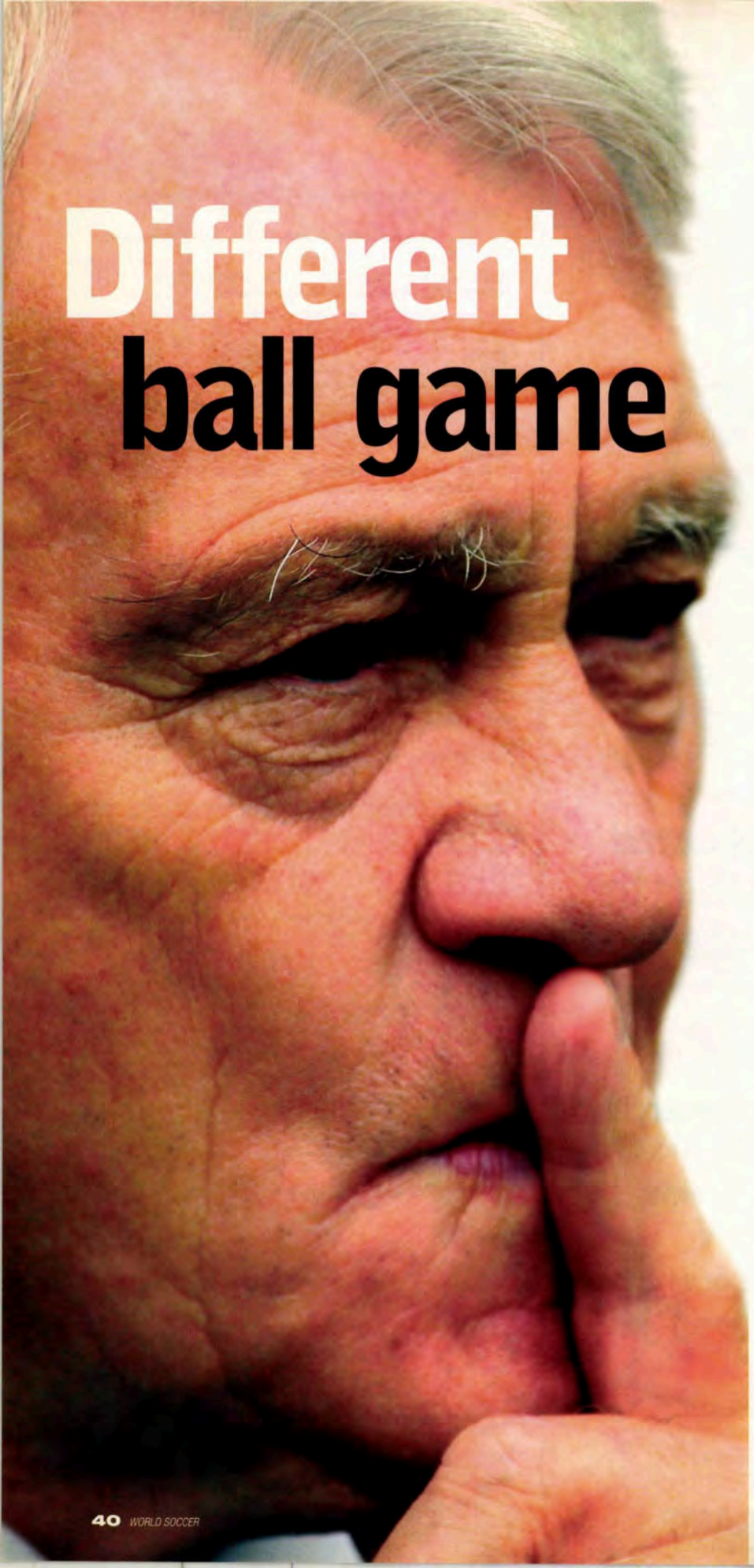


Different ball game

UEFA 1954 50 years 2004

In the third of a special series of articles to mark UEFA's golden jubilee, former England manager Bobby Robson – now Sir Bobby, and boss of Newcastle United – recalls how the attitude to coaching has changed over the past few decades since his days as an international player

I CAME TO FULHAM at 17 in 1950 and Bill Dodgin – old Bill Dodgin, not the son [who played for Arsenal] – was my first coach as a professional player. Mind you, coaching was very limited in those days. A lot of our training was without the ball. Stamina and endurance for 90 minutes on heavy pitches with the old leather footballs was what it was all about.

Nowadays you can count 40 footballs on the pitch at training. Back then you were lucky if there were two anywhere in sight. We'd run five laps, walk one, then run three, walk one, run two, walk one, and that was it. There were no tactics. That side of it has changed out of all recognition.

Coaching in England started with Walter Winterbottom. He was not only manager of the England team in the 1950s but also FA director of coaching, and he saw that as the more important job. He had a great knowledge of the game – and he could also impart it and ran outstanding courses.

I got lucky when I went to West Bromwich Albion because Vic Buckingham was the manager – and Vic was a manager/coach. He was one of Walter's disciples so I came under the influence of a man who had the right ideas about training and teaching the game. He drew up proper training schemes and schedules, and organised functional practices. He was manager for the six years I was at West Brom and then, after I returned to Fulham, they brought him down as well.

But it was Walter who persuaded me and Don Howe, when we were both England players together at West Brom, to go in for coaching in a serious way. At 27 you think you'll go on playing for the rest of your life. But, of course, he knew better. He said: "I want you to come to Lilleshall and get your badges." So we went and we had qualified – full badge, mind you – before we finished our playing careers. I even started some coaching at Oxford University for two guineas an hour.

My first serious stint as a manager was at Ipswich. I had very little experience and in fact I worked without a contract for the first eight months. Then I went to the other extreme and got a 10-year deal. The great thing was I had a chance to put my own ideas into practice – proper training schedules, and so on. In fact, I wasn't only the manager, I was also my own coach – and I also put a lot of effort into the youth policy. Nowadays we have these fancy names – centres of excellence, academies, and so on – but youth policy is still what it's really all about. Finding

youngsters with raw talent and trying to teach them to make the most of it.

I used my own ideas. We played with two strikers and little Eric Gates in the space just behind them. I always had a flat back four and John Wark in front as a defensive midfielder. Then I had Frans Thijssen and Arnold Muhren. I didn't have wingers, but Thijssen and Muhren were such outstanding players and covered so much ground we didn't need them.

We were voted the best team in Europe in 1981, the year we won the UEFA Cup. We would have won the League as well if we'd had another two players. But there wasn't the money for me to go out and buy.

Then I got the England job and it took me two years to adjust. It was lonely. You didn't see the players for months sometimes and the chance of any coaching work with them was almost non-existent.

So I got involved with the coaching set-up at the FA. I was director of coaching as well as England manager. We launched the centres of excellence, the residential school at Lilleshall and started work for the first time seriously coaching the coaches. I had the time and the urge to do it, and I enjoyed it. But my successors didn't want the extra complications.

What nobody remembers now is that I was manager of England in the days before League matches were postponed, so we could have only three days to prepare for our internationals. Some Mondays before a Wednesday match I had only eight fit players, and most of them had knocks and bruises.

Only twice in my eight years did I have six days to prepare, when the clubs could be persuaded to postpone their matches on a Saturday. Also, for five years when I was manager our best teams were all banned from Europe so the players weren't getting international experience. It was a disaster. Yet I lost only one competitive qualifying match – 1-0 to Denmark at Wembley – and that only because of a disputed handball against Phil Neal.

After the 1990 World Cup I went abroad and it was very different. There you really are the coach and all you have to worry about is coaching the senior players, picking the team and the tactics. I loved it. Once training is finished the day is your own. If I decided we didn't want the team training in the afternoon then I had the time off. So I could go shopping, play golf, learn the language and prepare my work with the team. In England, I'm here from nine in the morning until seven at night.

I stayed abroad 10 years, in Holland, Portugal, Spain and Holland again. The expectations are different. You do two years at a club and move on. Here, I'd spent the first 22 years of my managerial career in just two jobs – Ipswich and England.

The coach gets more respect abroad, too. They called me Mister or Sir – even before I was one for real! I never had any problems with any of the players and I worked with some of the best in the world – Ronaldo, for example.

Of course, all the time I was away I had seen the Premiership developing, and that was exciting. Though I was enjoying myself, I am English and I wanted to be a part of it. I went back to PSV for one last season and then came home in 1999.

At that point all the top clubs had settled managers. But then Newcastle made a terrible start, Ruud Gullit resigned and the job was available. Of course I was interested. It was my club when I was a boy. Out of the blue I got a call from [then Newcastle chief executive] Freddie Fletcher, and in one day it was done.

Now every day I'm out on the pitch, running the training, drawing up the schedules – training, coaching, tactics, team selection, the lot. I get involved with the reserves and the academy, which most clubs have now – well, that's what I had at Ipswich but we called it a youth policy. So you might say in all that time nothing has changed – and yet everything.

Sir Bobby Robson was talking to Keir Radnedge of World Soccer, *a member of the ESM (European Sports Magazines) group*

Life and times (clockwise from right)...as PSV coach; a player at West Brom; on the England bench at Italia 90 with assistant Don Howe and physio Norman Medhurst; and starting out at Ipswich

'We used to run five laps, walk one, run three. There were no tactics'

SIR BOBBY ROBSON

- **Born 18 February 1933, in Sacriston, County Durham, England.**

- **CAREER AS A PLAYER**

Clubs: Fulham, West Bromwich Albion, Fulham (1950-66; total 583 League games, 133 goals).
England: 1958-63; 20 games, 4 goals.

- **CAREER AS A COACH/MANAGER**

Clubs: Vancouver Royals (Canada); Fulham, Ipswich Town (England); PSV Eindhoven (Holland); Sporting Lisbon, FC Porto (Portugal); Barcelona (Spain); PSV Eindhoven; Newcastle United (England – since September 1999).
England: 1982-1990.

- **ACHIEVEMENTS AS A COACH/MANAGER**

Club level: Dutch championship 1991, 1992 (PSV Eindhoven); Portuguese championship 1995, 1996 (FC Porto); UEFA Cup 1981 (Ipswich Town); European Cup-winners Cup 1997 (Barcelona); FA Cup 1978 (Ipswich Town); Portuguese Cup 1994 (FC Porto); Spanish Cup 1997 (Barcelona).
With England: 4th place, 1990 World Cup; quarter-finals, 1986 World Cup; finals tournament, Euro 88.

London aye

President Blatter gets his way as he is backed by FIFA meetings in the UK capital

SEPP BLATTER MET the Queen when FIFA launched its centenary year celebrations in London. But it was not all glitz and glamour as International Board and FIFA executive meetings were also on the agenda...

WADA deal has a way with words

FIFA's deal with the World Anti-Doping Agency appears to have driven a coach and horses through the latter's attempt to clean up international sport – and all apparently with WADA's acquiescence.

FIFA has agreed the easy bit, accepting all those statements about the need to ban drugs in sport, but it will not accept WADA's insistence on a minimum two-year suspension for drug cheats.

Surprisingly, that is apparently OK with International Olympic Committee leaders such as president Jacques Rogge and Dick Pound, who will attend the formal signing ceremony in Paris on May 21 in time to secure football's presence at the Athens Olympics. But it's hard to believe other sports – bludgeoned into accepting the minimum two-year suspension – will be as happy.

A glance at a dictionary presented FIFA (and WADA) with a face-saving compromise. Blatter said: "The WADA code allows, in exceptional cases, for individual assessment of a case. We have convinced WADA all football doping cases can be considered exceptional as the word is defined in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*.

"Of course we have to fight doping. But everybody has the right to be assessed properly, even if it's a delicate situation. In the World Youth Cup recently we had one player test positive for cannabis and one for nandrolone. One was banned for seven months and the other for 14 months. It was essential to deal differently with them because one involved a social drug and the other nandrolone, an anabolic steroid.

"It's not possible to put everything into the same parcel. Everyone must receive correct treatment under the law. To do otherwise would not be correct from a human rights standpoint." Both WADA and an individual offender can contest the sentences before the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne.

'It's a clever proposal. We were against the original idea'

G-14's Thomas Kurth on FIFA's scaled-down Club World Championship plans

Spelling it out...Blatter addresses the media after the FIFA executive meeting

G-14 wins Club World battle

G-14 has scored a significant victory judging by FIFA's drastically scaled-down revival proposals for the Club World Championship.

FIFA originally wanted to stage a three-week extravaganza in July next year featuring up to 12 clubs from its six regions. But the grouping of Europe's top clubs, which includes Manchester United, Real Madrid and Milan, declared outright opposition.

Now FIFA, needing Europe's champions to guarantee not only credibility but also sponsorship and TV cash, has changed tack. The 2005 event will be played over only eight days and will feature a mere six clubs – the champions of each confederation. It will take over the early-December slot of the existing World Club Cup, pending an agreement with Toyota – the latter event's sponsors – advert agency Dentsu and the host Japanese FA.

The European and South American champions will be seeded to the semi-finals, meaning they will play only two games.

"It's a very clever proposal," said G-14's general manager Thomas Kurth. "We were dead set against the original idea."

Gibraltar the giantkiller

Mighty FIFA risks a giantkilling in the Court of Arbitration for Sport. FIFA, prompted by Spain, says Gibraltar cannot be admitted as a member because the new statutes demand that applicants have independent international status. Gibraltar has already been down this road, however, with UEFA – and obtained legal clearance from the restrictions of retrospective legislation.

Board goes back to basics

Turning the clock back is not always a good idea. But all credit to the International Board

for doing just that by scrapping both the golden- and silver-goal formats for deciding drawn matches. The decision, which comes into effect after the Euro 2004 Final on July 4, makes good sense.

David Taylor, of the Scottish FA, said: "We've had golden goals, silver goals and it was only a question of time before we got a bronze goal. We had to revert to a simple method of deciding matches easily understandable by players, clubs and public."

The golden goal was introduced after the 1994 World Cup and the first significant strike was Oliver Bierhoff's winner for Germany in the Euro 96 Final against the Czech Republic at Wembley.

Subs are not the problem

The International Board missed the point when it voted 7-1 to limit teams to six substitutes in non-competitive matches.

England coach Sven Goran Eriksson had received letters of support for unlimited substitutes from 12 other bosses, including Germany's Rudi Voller, Italy's Giovanni Trapattoni, Wales's Mark Hughes and Scotland's Berti Vogts. But Blatter's personal opinion swung the decision – to the private anger of FA officials.

Blatter said: "We have to act. Fans pay to see a proper match over the stipulated 90 minutes not a selection of samples." FA chief executive Mark Palios said: "We supported our coach's position but had to recognise the democratic will of the meeting."

Multi-subbing is not the real problem. Far worse is persuading clubs and players that such friendlies serve a purpose.

Before Italy played the Czech Republic in Palermo in February, Trapattoni warned that any player with an eye on Euro 2004 had better attend.

Once, no Italian would dream of snubbing the *Azzurri*. But everything changed after the golden-goal defeat by South Korea at the 2002 World Cup. Christian Vieri and Alex Del Piero mused out loud whether the honour was worth the accompanying abuse, and Trapattoni has since been assailed by the absenteeism that has long frustrated England managers. Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti said: "We do all we can not to send players to the national team." He later said he had been joking but the humour was lost on Trap.

Meanwhile, with the subs restriction not coming in until July, Eriksson can carry on ringing his changes.

World football's London summit also decided...

- **Players removing shirts to celebrate a goal must be booked (though a sub-committee is to consider whether pulling a shirt over the face or head but not off the arms is bookable!).**
- **There will be no dispensation for England-based French and Brazilian players to miss FIFA's centenary match on May 20, even though that is just two days before the FA Cup Final. But it is hoped the France and Brazil coaches will allow any players involved in the latter event an early bath.**
- **Guatemala's suspension has been lifted provisionally (so its teams can garner financial breathing space from World Cup and CONCACAF events) while FIFA tries to broker a solution to a political row.**
- **No appetite for 'sausage time' – a German suggestion to extend half-time from 15 to 20 minutes was rejected. "We could see no sporting reason for this change," said FIFA general secretary Urs Linsi.**
- **Experimentation in England to advance free-kicks nine metres as punishment for dissent will be extended for one last season.**
- **Communication via earpiece between coaches and players (as tried by enterprising Genk in Belgium) will not be allowed.**
- **One-piece kits, which incorporate shirts and shorts, as worn by Cameroon in the African Nations Cup, will be banned.**
- **From next season matches may be played on artificial pitches that meet the FIFA standard (competition rules permitting).**

Window of lost opportunity

The January transfer window can work two ways – as Teplice found ahead of their UEFA Cup duel with Celtic. When the Czech Cup holders KO'd Feyenoord in the second round, the magazine *Gol* pictured the celebrating players with a headline reading: "What next?"

The question was soon answered but not in the manner coach Frantisek Straka, or the fans, wanted. By the time they faced Celtic, Teplice were barely recognisable from the team who won 2-0 in Rotterdam. Strikers Jan Rezek and Henrich Bencik had moved to Sparta Prague and German club LR Ahlen respectively. Playmaker Petr Vorisek followed Rezek to Sparta, midfielder Roman Lengyel joined Russia's Saturn Ramenskoye, Michal Kolomaznik moved to Germany's Jahn Regensburg, and Ludek Zelenka and Pavel Veleba went out on loan. Straka said: "We went away for the winter break and came back with a new team." Not, on the evidence of the 3-0 Celtic Park defeat, a stronger team.

To rotate or not to rotate

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger can get away with resting Thierry Henry now and again but resting Ruud Van Nistelrooy backfired as Manchester United could manage only a 1-1 draw at Fulham. The Dutchman did himself few favours by being booked on the bench for dissent.

Out of turn...Van Nistelrooy

Opinions vary. At Real Madrid, the likes of Ronaldo, Zidane, Figo and Beckham play every game (when not injured or suspended) and at Juventus Alex Del Piero has asked coach Marcello Lippi to forget rotation so the team can regain their rhythm.

Phil Neal, who played almost every match for Liverpool's most successful team in the 1970s and 1980s, once said: "When you're winning you don't get tired."

Jury still out on Jacques

Jacques Santini is guiding France towards their European title defence with his authority weakened by the federation's refusal to extend his contract beyond Euro 2004 Final day on July 4.

Santini took the job charged with rebuilding French morale after the 2002 World Cup flop. He succeeded to such an extent that the side won all eight Euro qualifiers and the Confederations Cup.

Under pressure...Santini

But it has not been enough to convince the federation, still pained by events in Korea. President Claude Simonet extended Roger Lemerre's contract before the World Cup then struggled to winkle him out of the job afterwards.

FOOTBALL MEMORIES

Brian Glanville remembers Hugo Meisl, the man behind the great inter-war Austria team

A Wunderful life

HUGO MEISL was the inspiration of Austrian football between the wars, the architect of the famous *Wunderteam* along with coach Jimmy Hogan.

The team played classical football, based on what were then Scottish principles, though when Meisl and Hogan took Austria to Glasgow to play the Scots in 1933, Meisl admired the hosts for their potent use of the long ball and physical prowess.

Born in 1881, Meisl grew up in Vienna, the son of a rich Jewish family who wanted him to be a banker. But the young man's passion was for football. Though fragile, he played successfully before the Great War for a club initially known as The Cricketers, who relied on his skilful technique as a forward.

After military service, he was made a clerk at Bauer's bank, a leading Viennese financial house. However, Meisl spent little more than an hour a day doing his actual work. For the rest of the time he could be found in the correspondence department, in front of a large pile of letters related to Austrian football federation business. Aided by a Colonel Van Hoffmann, Meisl also put vast sums into the development of the game.

Hogan came to Vienna in 1912, having already coached in Holland, but his first session, with the Amateur Sports club, was a failure. Meisl came to the rescue. He held a long, intense session with Hogan and from that and later discussions grew Hogan's modified, hugely successful approach.

High skill, finesse and shrewd passing were the essence of the so-called Vienna School. But a few years after the Great War Austria suffered a 5-0 thrashing by Southern Germany in Nuremberg.

Should they abandon their principles and play a more direct, simple game? For 15 hours on the train journey home Meisl and his men thrashed out the problem, finally deciding to persevere with the Vienna School.

Well played...Meisl (right) with FA secretary Sir Frederick Wall as the Austrians depart after the 1932 classic against England

Meisl, working ceaselessly for the Austrian game, was rarely seen at home. One of his small sons once asked his mother: "Who was that man who was with us last night?" "That," said Frau Meisl, "was your father."

Meisl treated his players directly, sympathetically but firmly and brooked no dissent. If a player was, in his opinion, wasting chances to score, he would say: "Stop playing so foolishly and see that in future you shoot from such a position, or this is the last time you will play for Austria."

When in 1933 Meisl's team, masquerading as a Vienna XI, lost 4-2 to Arsenal at Highbury, Roland Allen wrote in London's *Evening Standard*: "When the Austrians have learned how to turn their cleverness into something that counts, when they have organised the winning of matches as highly as they have organised the taming of a football, they will make us all sit up and take notice."

They had, in fact, done that a year earlier, in a brilliant display against England at Stamford Bridge. The Austrians viewed the match as massively important, though Meisl was pessimistic before it, saying his team were below form, hit by injuries, and facing problems with the English climate, the probable state of the pitch and "the abundant use the English make of their bodies".

'Meisl had long discussions with Hogan and from these grew the hugely-successful style known as the Vienna School of football'

Certainly, they looked nervous in the opening stages and Jimmy Hampson gave England a 2-0 lead in the first 26 minutes.

A dazzling move early in the second half enabled Karl Zischek, the Austrian right-winger, to pull one back. But Eric Houghton's fierce free-kick then bounced in off Anton Schall's head. Although Mathias Sindelar, Austria's magically elusive centre-forward known as the Man of Paper, made it 3-2, Sammy Crooks got another for England before Zischek's second ended the scoring at 4-3.

Meisl at last achieved his dream of victory over England in Vienna in 1936, when Austria won 2-1. He died the following year but his tombstone, designed to look like a miniature football field complete with players, was later desecrated by the Nazis.

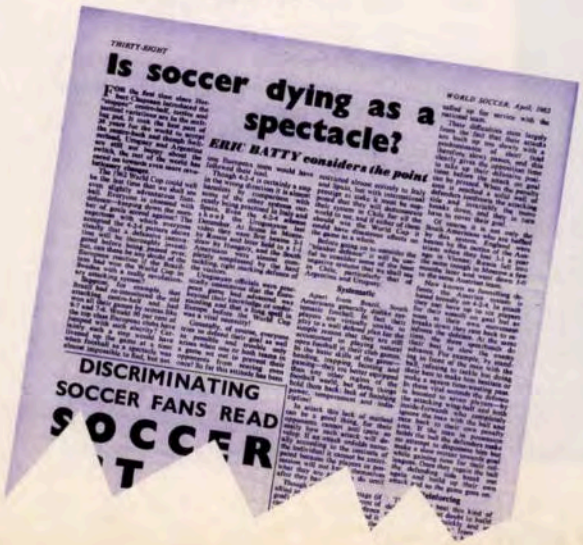
FROM THE ARCHIVES
APRIL 1962

"IS SOCCER DYING AS A SPECTACLE?" was the question posed by Eric Batty in *World Soccer* 42 years ago.

With the World Cup finals in Chile fast approaching, Batty was concerned that the tournament could well be "the last time we shall see even slightly adventurous football".

Increasing emphasis was being placed on "defensive systems" with "hard tackling" and "tight marking", and Batty was particularly concerned about the tactical development of certain teams. "Though 4-2-4 is certainly a step in the wrong direction," he wrote, "it is almost harmless by comparison with some of the other systems currently being practised in Italy and Spain."

The "link men" were becoming increasingly important as teams switched from defence to attack with greater speed and with longer passes. Most of the teams in Chile would play this way, Batty said, "with the team contracting and expanding with the flow of the game. Seven in defence, six in attack is the aim, with every player moving for 90 minutes in an attempt to bridge the gap between the 11-man team and the 13-man system."



FOOTBALL LINGO

#2 Pichichi

Rafael Moreno Aranzadi, nicknamed 'Pichichi', was a legendary striker for Athletic Bilbao whose death, aged 29, in 1922 was mourned across Spain. His name lives on in the form of the annual *Pichichi*, awarded to the Spanish League's top scorer. The winner is thus known as the *Pichichi* (pronounced pee-chee-chee).

QUIZ

mitre

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Mitre has kindly donated a top-quality football for this month's Quiz. The first correct entry selected at random after April 16 will win the ball.

SEND YOUR ENTRY, ON A POSTCARD, TO:
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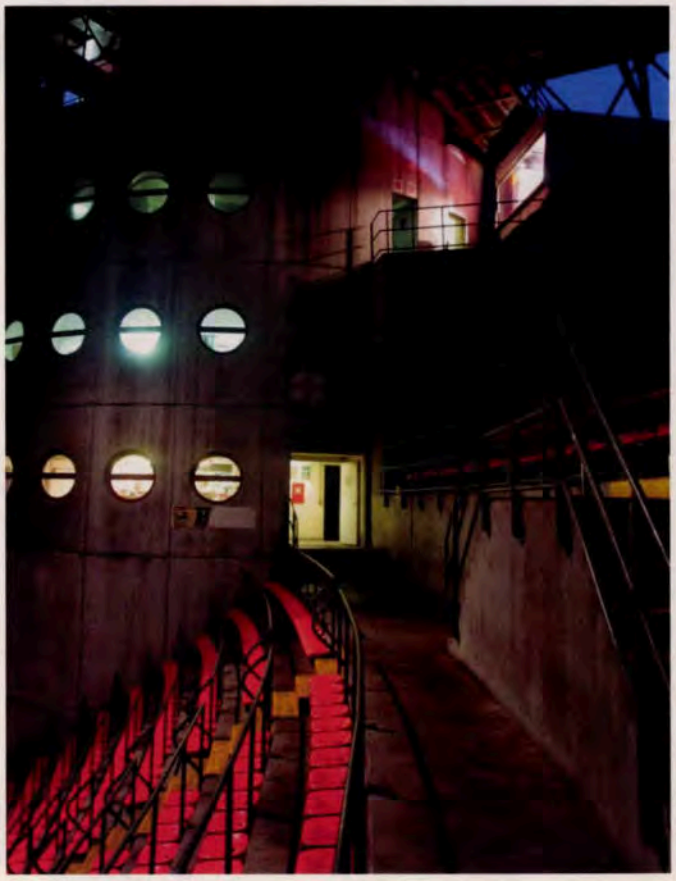
THIS MONTH'S POSER:

Name the famous stadium pictured



Tunisia reach the top

...but gamesmanship takes the shine off their success. Mark Gleeson reports

High five...Ziad Jaziri wheels away to celebrate scoring Tunisia's winner

2004 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

TUNISIA FINALLY GOT their hands on the Holy Grail, and on home soil, having taken three turns to host the tournament and played in three Finals before winning the African Nations Cup.

Success at the 2004 finals, capped by the 2-1 victory over Morocco in Tunis, was built on workmanlike performances from a country short on playing resources but always determined to keep up a high profile on the continent's footballing map.

For years, Tunisian clubs have consistently won trophies in continental competitions, and now the national team has delivered, too, albeit under a cloud of controversy.

The hosts' victory came against a background of poor sportsmanship from their players, fans and even the tournament organisers. The team's gamesmanship won them few friends but it has long been a feature of the win-at-all-costs attitude that the small north African country brings to the game. Simulation, play-acting and niggling was never far from the surface and took off much of the shine of the victory. There were few neutrals who applauded their achievement.

Supporters jeered and whistled through the national anthems of their six opponents on the way to the trophy, ballboys were selective in their service, and opponents complained of general indifference from the organisers on the day leading up to matches against Tunisia.

There was also the matter of Sochaux's Brazil-born striker Francileudo dos Santos, whose Tunisian passport was fast-tracked before the tournament and was granted on the basis that he spent two seasons with Tunisian club Etoile Sahel. His inclusion stretched the credibility of the naturalisation rules, and the fact that he scored four goals in the tournament clouds the conviction that Tunisia are worthy champions.

It is a real pity that these issues detracted from the team's success, engineered by former France coach Roger Lemerre. The tournament presented Lemerre with a chance to redeem a reputation tattered by France's dismal showing at the last World Cup and he put out a well-drilled outfit, strong and disciplined in defence, full of hustle and bustle in midfield and with

African kings...Tunisia parade the trophy

the ability to change options quickly. Fitness and a strong will to win were added bonuses, and Lemerre's achievement four years after winning the European Championship in Rotterdam must have been immensely satisfying.

Must have been? There was no way to find out for sure because he spent just 120 seconds in the post-Final press conference, thanking his players and the Tunisian people and wishing the journalists a sarcastic *"merci, au revoir"*. He has always had a testy relationship with the media.

In the Final, Lemerre was not afraid to ring the changes, bringing off Mehdi Nafti at half-time to strengthen the midfield after Morocco had fought back to 1-1.

Santos opened the scoring with a free header after four minutes from Nafti's cross but Morocco, after several let-offs from nervous linesmen, slowly clawed their way back into the game. Seven minutes before half-time they were level, Youssef Mokhtari heading home after good work from Abdelkrim Kaissi and Youssef Hadji.

Tunisia had lost control in midfield but Lemerre's half-time change restored the balance. The winner came shortly after the break when Jose Clayton, another Brazil-born player, drilled a shot-cum-cross into the penalty area; Morocco's giant goalkeeper Khalid Fouhami failed to gather the ball in, and instead teed it up perfectly for Ziad Jaziri to score.

Lemerre then made two more shrewd substitutions, ensuring Morocco remained under pressure as they sought another equaliser. In the end, 2-1 flattered the Moroccans.

Victory, after Tunisia had been runners-up in 1965 and 1996, sparked off dramatic celebrations for a country continually seeking to be recognised alongside the 'big boys' of African football.

● *See pages 48-51 for the rest of Mark Gleeson's Nations Cup reports, and World Service, starting page 75, for full results, line-ups and squads.*

FIVE NEW STARS

Youssef Hadji
(Bastia & Morocco)
The younger brother of Mustapha Hadji, he made his French League debut this season with Bastia, and was drafted into the national side soon after. Has the same gentle touch on the ball as his brother and a keen attacking flair.

Karim Hagui
(Etoile Sahel & Tunisia)
Just 20, but he never once looked out of place during the tournament and showed great versatility. His right-wing runs were a feature of the early part of the tournament, but he switched to the left when Hatem Trabelsi returned to the side. Hagui then played in central defence in the Final.

Touch player...Hadji

Ziad Jaziri
(Gaziantepspor & Tunisia)
Short, tricky striker with a quick turn of pace who scored both the first and last goals of the tournament. Was well known on the African circuit when with Etoile Sahel but now gaining wider recognition after moving to Turkish club Gaziantepspor.

Youssef Mokhtari
(Wacker Burghausen & Morocco)
Brought up from the age of two in Rauheim, Germany, he was 'discovered' playing in the Second Division of the Bundesliga by Morocco coach Badou Ezaki last year. His set-piece routine was a feature of the Nations Cup; his ambition of playing in the English Premiership seems within reach.

Buzzing...Odemwingie

Osaze Odemwingie
(La Louviere & Nigeria)
Born in Tashkent in what is now Uzbekistan, he moved to Nigeria as a child and played for Bendel Insurance before getting a move to Belgian club La Louviere. Short and relatively lightweight striker but very quick and keeps defenders on their toes throughout the 90 minutes.

FINAL – MATCH FACTS

Feb 14 - Rades, Tunis
Tunisia 2 (Santos 4, Jaziri 51)
Morocco 1 (Mokhtari 38)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Ndoye (Sen)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - H Trabelsi, Hagui, Jaidi, Clayton, Bouazizi, Nafti (Mnari 46), Chedli, Benachour (Ghodhbane 57), Jaziri (Mhadhebi 70), Santos.
Morocco: Fouhami - Ouaddou, Naybet, El-Karkouri, Regragui, Kaissi, Safri (Yaacoubi 63), Roumani (Zairi 73), Y Hadji (Baha 87), Mokhtari, Chamakh.

MINUTE BY MINUTE
● 3/4 min Shot on full volley from acute angle by Clayton turned around for a corner for Tunisia.
● 4 TUNISIA 1-0. Nafti flicks a cross into the penalty area, Santos finds space between Regragui and Naybet to head home for his fourth goal of the tournament.
● 8 Ouaddou's sloppy back pass allows Jaziri to sneak the ball away for Tunisia but his progress is clumsily halted by Naybet. However, the Moroccan is not penalised.
● 14 A long ball from Tunisia captain Bouazizi is perfectly placed into the path of Santos but the striker cannot get any power into his shot.
● 17 Roumani takes a quick throw, Kaissi knocks in a cross, but Mokhtari, under pressure from Tunisian keeper Boumnijel, heads wide.
● 20 Chedli shoots wide as Jaziri's cross evades the entire Moroccan defence.
● 33 Jaziri makes a brilliant break and gets the perfect pass only for the cat-napping linesman from Zimbabwe to erroneously flag for offside.
● 38 MOROCCO 1-1. Kaissi's little forward ball sends Hadji to the byline, from where he delivers the perfect chip for Mokhtari to score with a spectacular diving header.
● 42 A Chamakh shot is unconvincingly saved by Boumnijel.
● 45 Hagui and Bouazizi get in each other's way and head wide from Clayton's corner with Morocco's goal yawning.
● 51 TUNISIA 2-1. Clayton's cross, after a one-two with fellow Brazilian Santos, is not held by Fouhami and allows Jaziri to restore the home team's lead.
● 60 Another bad decision from the linesmen as Ghodhbane puts Jaziri away on the counter-attack. Again, offside is flagged in error.
● 69 Mokhtari tries to get a header in but Bouazizi does enough to put him off target.
● 86 Substitute Mhadhebi's pace sets up a chance for Tunisia but his shot is wide.

GROUP A

Hosts handle the pressure

HOSTS TUNISIA SPENT the build-up to the start of the Nations Cup being reminded about what had happened to them when they last hosted the tournament, 10 years ago.

In 1994, they had put in a solid preparatory programme, including friendlies against Germany and Holland, but then crumbled under the massive burden of expectation. They were humiliated in the opening match, losing 2-0 to Mali, and failed to make it through the group stage.

With that history hanging over them, it was no wonder that Roger Lemerre's side looked like a rabbit caught in the headlights in the opening exchanges against Rwanda.

After a world-class opening ceremony, Tunisia had everything to lose against their opponents, who were appearing in the finals for the first time. Rwanda, ravaged by a brutal genocide nine years ago, were

Flier...Jaziri celebrates Tunisia's finals opener

beginning their fairytale finals appearance in front of 60,000 in the tournament's opening game. And although they fell behind to a Ziad Jaziri goal after 26 minutes, they equalised five minutes later. Angolan refugee Joao Elias, naturalised by a country he had visited just once before, scored with a dream-like free-kick, and Tunisia looked like they had slipped on a banana skin.

Cue the entrance of Brazil-born Francileudo dos Santos, another with dubious passport credentials, to score Tunisia's winner 10 minutes into the second half and gain instant hero status.

It got a lot easier for the hosts after that, despite Lemerre drastically changing his team for their next game, against the Democratic Republic of Congo. That motley collection was put together by Mick Wadsworth just one month before the start of the tournament, and though the former Huddersfield manager was good value for his plain assessment of the vagaries of African football, his team were hopeless. DR Congo lost 3-0 to Tunisia after Lomana Lua Lua, the only Congolese player who looked like he belonged on the Nations Cup stage, had stupidly got himself sent off.

With a second successive win, Tunisia became the first side to make sure of progress to the quarter-finals, unleashing a collective sigh of relief.

Guinea had beaten the Congolese in their opening game after coming from behind with goals from Titi Camara, on his return to the attack, and Pascal Feindouno, proving a hit on the right.

Camara, the former Liverpool, West Ham and Marseille player, was enjoying a fine swansong, having also competed in the 1994 finals in Tunisia. But although he opened the scoring in Guinea's second game, against Rwanda, the debutants kept their unlikely dream alive by equalising in stoppage time through Karim Kamanzi.

Now, if Guinea lost their final match to Tunisia and Rwanda beat the Simbas of Congo, the tiny east African country could finish second in the group.

It almost worked out that way when Slim Benachour gave Tunisia the lead against Guinea and then Said Makasi, born in the Democratic Republic of Congo but a mercenary in service of Rwanda, scored against the land of his birth in the other match.

Rwanda were on the cusp of the most unlikely progress until Camara's experience and guile secured Guinea a late draw and a place in the last eight. Rwanda went home to a heroes' welcome and Wadsworth back to the obscurity of north-east England.

Adopted hero...two-goal Frederic Kanoute escapes from Tom Juma during Mali's clash with Kenya

GROUP B

Kanoute packs them in

THE ARRIVAL OF Frederic Kanoute on the African stage was preceded by much bleating from Britain but all the pre-tournament pressures seemingly made little impact on him.

Instead, the France-born Tottenham striker found an almost instant rapport with his new country, Mali, and scored in both the first two matches.

Kanoute proved one of the big attractions at the tournament, not only for his impact on the pitch but also the symbolic resonance of his participation. Firstly, the way he shrugged off the pressure put on him to stay with his club at a time when the scheduling of the Nations Cup finals in January and February is coming under greater scrutiny. Secondly, because Kanoute is part of a potential new treasure trove of talent for Africa, available since FIFA's rules changed on international eligibility.

The Spurs man scored twice in Mali's 3-1 win over Kenya in the opening match of the group, a result that put the west Africans in the driving seat after Senegal could only draw 0-0 with Burkina Faso.

Senegal have been struggling to find their form since reaching the 2002 World Cup quarter-finals. The 'family' spirit so evident under former coach Bruno Metsu appears to have dissipated under his successor, Guy Stephan, and the novelty of the team's success has now been replaced by the burden of expectation.

During the group stage, Liverpool's Salif Diao had a highly-publicised go at his team-mates' lack of discipline and particularly the penchant of his club-mate El Hadji Diouf for doing what he pleased in the Senegal camp.

Diao's comments came even after Senegal won their second group match, hammering Kenya 3-0 – a second successive defeat for the Harambee Stars to

end their outside chance of reaching the last eight. All three goals were scored in the first half-hour against the east Africans' hapless defence.

Mali kept ahead of Senegal in the standings, however, by beating neighbours Burkina Faso 3-1. The cold weather in Tunis, where many of the group games were staged, was an unusual experience for the Nations Cup, but Mali did their best to keep things hot, particularly the over-the-top tackling of defenders Ibrahim Thiam and Sammy Traore.

The two wins were enough to guarantee Mali a quarter-final place, with Senegal needing just a draw in their final game to also progress. This they achieved but they had to come from behind against Mali, who took the lead through tall striker Dramane Traore – proving a perfect foil to the now tightly-marked Kanoute.

Senegal's equaliser was a flying header from Habib Beye, drafted in at right-back to replace Omar Daf in a constantly changing starting line-up.

Have flags, will travel...Algeria's vociferous fans make their presence felt in Sousse

But while Senegal were booking their last eight ticket, Kenya finally achieved a long-stated objective of winning a game at the finals. It had taken five participations and 14 matches, but inspired by the strength and skill of Dennis Oliech they beat Burkina Faso 3-0 to break their duck before heading off home.

GROUP C

Algeria carried by travelling support

DEFENDING CHAMPIONS Cameroon were slow out of the starting blocks, Egypt airborne almost immediately – but in the end both were overshadowed by Algeria and their passionate fans.

Algeria launched a veritable invasion of neighbouring Tunisia, with more than 20,000 fans flooding over the border to cheer on their team in Sousse; so many, in fact, that in the end the two governments agreed to temporarily close their common border. It was the biggest travelling support in the history of the Nations Cup and Algeria's white, green and red colours took over the town, to the chagrin of the haughty locals.

The intensity of their support drove Algeria to a draw with Cameroon in their opening match and then a famous victory over Egypt. Against their north African rivals, they rocked on the ropes like a punch-drunk boxer only to deliver a sucker punch at the end of the contest.

Algeria coach Rabah Saadane said his side's qualification, which came despite defeat in their last game, against Zimbabwe, was a "miracle", and that they were carried along by the travelling support.

Cameroon, launching a bid for an unprecedented third successive Nations Cup title, topped the group as expected but without much conviction. They led against Algeria before conceding a second-half goal from a corner to Brahim Zafour that highlighted the defending champions' defensive deficiencies. Against newcomers Zimbabwe in their next match, they let in three more goals, but scored five. Veteran striker Patrick Mboma, who had been recalled to the squad on the instructions of the country's government, scored the first Nations Cup finals hat-trick since the 1998 tournament in Burkina Faso. It took his overall finals tally to 11, three behind the record of Ivorian Laurent Pokou.

The Indomitable Lions' goalless draw with Egypt in the final game was enough to see them through to the quarter-finals as group winners.

Egypt began at a rapid pace, showing great skill and a relentless pace of attack in their opening game, against Zimbabwe, though their finishing was poor. They kept up a high tempo but were actually behind seconds after the break when Peter Ndlovu scored Zimbabwe's first ever goal at the Nations Cup finals.

Egypt fought back to win 2-1 and suggested they could justify many of the pre-tournament predictions that this could be their year.

Against Algeria, they again came from behind, Ahmed Belal equalising Mamar Mamouni's opening goal with a smart finish. It then seemed only a matter of time before they would overrun the Algerians, especially after Mamouni was sent off just before the hour. But Egypt seemed to panic as they failed to convert their overwhelming possession into goals, and Algeria took advantage. With just five minutes to go, substitute Hocine Achiou went on a mazy run from inside his own half, weaving through defenders before scoring a dramatic winner.

Even then, Egypt still had a chance to qualify if Zimbabwe could beat Algeria by two goals, which they almost did, even after Adam Ndlovu had missed two sitters. He finally found the net midway through the second half, and Joel Luphahla made it 2-0 shortly afterwards. But Achiou again proved Algeria's saviour – and Egypt's nemesis – taking advantage of a dreadful goalkeeping error to pull one back.

The two north African countries finished level on points and goal difference but Algeria's four goals to Egypt's three carried them through to the last eight.

GROUP D

Morocco surprise, South Africa stiff

THE SO-CALLED GROUP of death did provide the potential for a couple of cardiac arrests and confirmed that rigor mortis has set in in South African football.

But Morocco, who were not given much chance before the start of the tournament, lifted the spirits and proved all the pundits wrong, including their own coach, Badou Ezaki.

Before the event, the former international goalkeeper said he was rebuilding his side for the 2006 World Cup qualifiers with the emphasis on youth and untried talent.

Ezaki's expectation was low for the Nations Cup, merely hoping Morocco would not embarrass themselves too much, particularly with publicity points at stake in the 2010 World Cup bidding campaign. But the north Africans were able to take advantage of a complacent-looking Nigeria side in their opening match.

The Super Eagles, who looked like they would rather be on the beach at their resort hotel in Monastir, dawdled around the pitch as if they were sleepwalking. Morocco made them pay when substitute Youssef Hadji scored the game's only goal with 13 minutes remaining. The younger brother of former African Footballer of the Year Mustapha Hadji was given space in the penalty area to swivel and fire in his shot to secure three points.

South Africa, who had gone into the tournament without six key stars, a coaching change on the eve of their departure and a dearth of strikers, won as expected in Sfax against newcomers Benin. However, the fact they scored only twice, both in the

Mine...Morocco keeper Fouhami v South Africa

second half from Siyabonga Nomvete, hinted that they were a team in some trouble.

This was confirmed when Nigeria ran riot against them in Monastir four days later, winning 4-0. The Super Eagles' tally included a disputed penalty converted by Jay-Jay Okocha, the 1,000th goal in Nations Cup history.

The last two goals were gems from substitute Osaze Odemwingie, given his chance because of the decision to send home a trio of players from the Nigerian camp for indiscipline. Victor Agali (Schalke), Yakubu Aiyegbeni (Portsmouth) and Celestine Babayaro (Chelsea) were given their marching orders after being seen drinking coffee outside their rooms and after the curfew hour.

Coach Christian Chukwu took a calculated gamble on the depth of his squad in deciding to send them packing, hoping that it would bring some focus to the remaining 19 players.

As the result against South Africa proved, it was just the tonic. Okocha admitted as much, although he was at pains to distance himself from the expulsion of his three compatriots.

Morocco made it two out of two by beating Benin 4-0 in Sfax. Benin keeper Rachad Chitou put in a disastrous performance, single-handedly ruining all the hard work the tiny west African country had done over the two preceding years in getting to the Nations Cup finals for the first time.

Benin finally got a goal, albeit a last-minute consolation, from their best player, Moussa Latoundji, in their final match, a 2-1 defeat by Nigeria.

Morocco made sure of top place by drawing 1-1 with South Africa, who could only have qualified if they were able to beat the north Africans by four clear goals. Without the likes of Benni McCarthy, Shaun Bartlett and Quinton Fortune that was never an option.

QUARTER-FINALS

Lions finally lose their crown

CAMEROON'S QUEST FOR a record-breaking third successive title and fifth Nations Cup win overall came to a dramatic end in the last eight, but the real theatre was provided by the north African derby between Algeria and Morocco.

At least 70 people were reportedly injured in clashes between Algerian fans and local police in the southern port of Sfax after the 3-1 loss to Morocco. Tunisia's repressive state media apparatus kept quiet about the incidents for several days and there was no independent confirmation, but there were certainly burning cars and broken shop windows near the stadium.

The trouble was predictable after the Algerians had victory snatched away from them in stoppage time. After a dour 83 minutes, Abdelmalek Cherrad had given the Algerians a lead that looked likely to book them an improbable semi-final place. But their delirious huge travelling support was silenced when Morocco equalised through Marouane Chamakh with virtually the last kick of normal time.

Algeria then collapsed, the adrenalin that had carried them through the group stage drained from their bodies, and goals from Youssef Hadji and Jaouad Zairi killed them off in extra-time.

Morocco were the last of the four sides through to the semi-finals; Mali the first, after they too had snatched a last-gasp win. The Malians were actually outplayed by Guinea in their match in Tunis but a speculative drive from captain Mahamadou Diarra was fumbled by goalkeeper Kemoko Camara and Mali went through 2-1.

Cameroon's defeat came after they had taken the lead against Nigeria with a long-awaited flash of brilliance from Samuel Eto'o. He sprinted on to a fine long through ball from Chelsea midfielder Geremi and outpaced the Super Eagles defence to score.

But Cameroon always looked vulnerable at the back and a silly foul by Lucien Mettomo on the stroke of half-time allowed Nigeria a free-kick in perfect Jay-Jay Okocha range. Nigeria's skipper duly obliged, scoring with a sublime effort.

John Utaka got the winner 17 minutes from time after bursting past a leaden-footed defence. So the Indomitable Lions were kings of the jungle no longer.

The pretenders to that throne promised to be Senegal but they too crashed out, beaten by their Tunisian hosts. It was a tempestuous game, characterised by the niggling gamesmanship of the Tunisians and the boorish behaviour of El Hadji Diouf, who aimlessly ran around the pitch and spent the rest of the time screaming at UAE referee Ali Bujsaim.

The churlishness inflamed passions on both sides, so that by the time Jouhar Mnari got the only goal just after the hour, a mini-riot was in the offing. Senegal were incensed that Diouf had been fouled in the build-up to the goal, yet Bujsaim had seen fit to allow play to continue.

It took five minutes to clear the pitch, already almost engulfed in fog, before play could continue. Diouf's persistent misbehaviour earned him a four-match African confederation ban, which means he will miss the first four of Senegal's 2006 World Cup qualifiers. Based on his Tunisian adventure, it will be no sad loss.

Battle of the giants...Jay-Jay Okocha tussles with Eric Djemba Djemba as Nigeria end Cameroon's reign

Behave yourself...referee Ali Bujsaim gets tough with El Hadji Diouf during the Tunisia-Senegal quarter-final

SEMI-FINALS

Tunisia take penalty prize

TUNISIA TOUGHED IT out over Nigeria to win a dramatic penalty shoot-out in their semi-final encounter, while Morocco's emphatic victory over Mali set up the first Nations Cup Final between two Arabic-speaking countries since 1959.

The hosts were backed by a rousing support in Rades but apart from two good, late chances for Francileudo dos Santos were unable to make much headway during the first half.

With the game still goalless after an hour, Benin referee Bonaventure Coffi Codjia took it upon himself to get the scoresheet going. First he handed Nigeria a soft penalty when Nwankwo Kanu went tumbling in the area. This was duly converted at the second attempt by Jay-Jay Okocha, who had been ordered to retake it after one of his team-mates had encroached in the box.

To even the score, Codjia handed Tunisia a spot-kick eight minutes from the end after Ziad Jaziri – who dived more than he dribbled during the tournament – went down under the challenge of Seyi Olofinjana.

Captain Khaled Badra imperiously struck home the equaliser, a stoic act given that he knew he would miss the Final having already been booked for the second successive game.

After a tedious extra-time period came the shoot-out, during which the first seven kicks were all converted. Tired Nigerian youngster Osaze Odemwingie then had his effort saved by Ali Boumnijel, to hand the advantage to the hosts. Karim Hagui, just 20, had the responsibility of making sure of Tunisia's passage to the Final, but he fulfilled it with aplomb, showing a maturity that belied his age.

Morocco made it an all-north African Final a few hours later in Sousse, rolling over a weary Mali team who could not raise their game against their seemingly hungrier opponents.

The unheralded Youssef Mokhtari scored twice from long-range to effectively kill off the Malian challenge. The first was a superb free-kick from the edge of the penalty area in the 13th minute; the second a low drive just before the hour.

With 10 minutes remaining Youssef Hadji added a third when he converted Marouane Chamakh's brilliant centre. And in stoppage time, substitute Nabil Baha rounded off the rout with a soaring effort from just inside the box.

Spot on...Tunisia celebrate victory over Nigeria

We've done it...Abdelkrim Kaissi (foreground) and his Moroccan team-mates know they are in the Final

Auxerre crash

February was the cruellest month for Guy Roux's side. Erik Bielderman reports

FRANCE

Down and out...Djibril Cisse has been affected by an international ban and worries over his prospects at Liverpool next season

AT THE START of February Auxerre were competing on four fronts: the League, French Cup, League Cup and UEFA Cup. Within a month the only hope of silverware for Guy Roux's team was in Europe having crashed out of both domestic cups and kissed goodbye to any chance of the championship.

The first elimination was in the League Cup, the only national trophy Auxerre have never won. After a 0-0 draw against Nantes, keeper Mickael Landreau stopped one Auxerre spot-kick and scored the last himself to give his side a 5-4 victory.

Exit No 2 was far more embarrassing, a 1-0 defeat at Fourth Division Brive in the the last 16 of the national Cup, prompting midfielder Philippe Violeau to say: "We now have a light programme so we will not be allowed to use our fixture list and tiredness as valid excuses for any poor performances."

A few days later the player was forced to recognise that yet another objective was out of reach following a 2-1 home League defeat to Lyon. "That is now an impossible dream," said Violeau, of Auxerre's championship prospects. "Monaco, PSG and Lyon are too far away and even qualification for the Champions League is uncertain."

So suddenly only the UEFA Cup remained, as Auxerre squeezed into the fourth round with a 1-0 aggregate defeat of Panathinaikos.

The team's disastrous February came despite talk that the Auxerre dressing-room was full of players who were desperate to win a trophy before leaving the club. Bonaventure Kalou, one of the few said to be staying next season, challenged his team-mates: "Everyone has to answer this simple question. Can I bring something to the club before I leave? I had a poor February, like [Olivier] Kapo and [Djibril] Cisse. We have to push ourselves – and wake up." Kapo, sent off in the goalless UEFA Cup first leg against Panathinaikos, acknowledged: "It's now a matter of will."

Willpower or not, Auxerre's problem of late has been scoring goals – only four in seven games during February, and none from Cisse, who has obviously been distracted by the five-game competitive international ban that has cost him his place at Euro 2004.

Roux's poser

Veteran coach Roux has been trying to rationalise the situation. "Maybe we don't score many goals, but in the last 13 matches we only conceded four," he said. "And I believe we will soon recover our attacking power because we still create four or five clear chances a game. That's the most important thing."

But Auxerre have also been losing the mental battle. This season, they have never looked convincing against the top teams. In games against Monaco, Lyon, PSG, Sochaux and Marseille, Roux's side have won only one, drawn three and lost four.

Against the backdrop of these poor results, the key players seem to be more concerned for their future careers. Next season, Cisse will play for Liverpool, though he is worried about whether they will qualify for the Champions League and if Gerard Houllier will still be manager. Defender Jean-Alain Boumsong has already signed for Rangers, a move that has been criticised for being for financial rather than sporting reasons. His defensive partner Philippe Mexes is being scrutinised by several Italian clubs, while Finnish midfielder Teemu Tainio could also go. Kapo, out of contract at the end of the season, interests PSG, but Tottenham, Charlton and Birmingham have also looked at him. Arsenal's Arsene Wenger has already been in touch, and Kapo has other options in Spain, with Valencia and Mallorca said to be interested.

A new team has to be built next season – and as Roux concedes, "the next generation from the academy is not going to produce a new Cisse or Mexes".

While Auxerre were losing their grip, Monaco, Lyon and PSG were still on course in the League race. Leaders Monaco are still favourites, but the gap, which had been as much as nine points, is narrowing. That said, coach Didier Deschamps will soon have key men Ludovic Giuly and Sebastien Squillaci back from injury.

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WORLD SOCCER has teamed up with sports retailers Sports Soccer and Sports World to give you the chance to win the new England away shirt from kit manufacturers Umbro.

The lucky winner will also get a Sports Soccer England training kit that includes an England polo shirt, shorts and training pants. Fifteen runners-up will each receive one of the new Umbro shirts.

And all you have to do to stand a chance of winning is correctly answer the simple question on the entry form and send it back to us by the closing date of April 12. Winners will be selected at random after the closing date. No correspondence will be entered into and the editor's decision is final.

The new away kit goes on sale from March 31, when England will wear it for the first time against manager Sven Goran Eriksson's native Sweden in Gothenburg.

For the first time ever, the new England away kit contains the garment technology called X-Static, a fibre made from 99.9 per cent pure silver weave.

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Ajax on high...Yannis Anastasiou outmuscles PSV's Kevin Hofland during the top-of-the-table clash in Amsterdam

Duel over dual role costs PSV dear

HOLLAND

GUUS HIDDINK HAS finally agreed to take a combined coaching/technical director role at champions PSV Eindhoven from next season, but the crisis the negotiations caused undoubtedly played a part in the club's title-threatening defeat away to Ajax in early February.

The saga began when chairman Harry Van Raaij suggested Hiddink, the coach since summer 2002, be given the dual role for the next three years. But the PSV board would only countenance the move on a yearly basis because of the increased salary commitment. Hiddink and Van Raaij both felt humiliated and threatened to leave.

The crisis came on the eve of the Ajax match, and with Hiddink's potential departure in mind, the team lost 2-1. The result, coupled with a subsequent defeat at Heerenveen, left PSV six points behind Ajax with 12 games to play.

Negotiations were reopened days after the Amsterdam defeat and Hiddink finally got his three-year deal. But in football terms the damage had already been done.

Another wrangle was settled when Feyenoord coach-elect Ruud Gullit agreed to pay the FA compensation for pulling out of his assistant role to national coach Dick Advocaat at Euro 2004.

A number of other coaching changes have been lined up for next season. Erwin Koeman, Hiddink's assistant, will take the reins at RKC Waalwijk, where Martin Jol has decided to quit; Jan Van Dijk, of Second Division Helmond Sport, will take over at RBC Roosendaal after Robert Maaskant lined up the Willem II job; Twente assistant Rini Coolen is to step up after Rene Vandereycken's decision to leave; Frans Adelaar, now at Second Division De Graafschap, will take over at Den Haag; and assistant Johan Steur moves up at Volendam after Henk Wisman was sacked for criticising the club over a lack of new signings.

Advocaat, who has renewed his contract until the 2006 World Cup, waived the chance to experiment during Holland's 1-0 friendly win against the United States. The only new face was Ajax defender John Heitinga.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

PORTUGAL

Book the bus, Porto

FC Porto are set for yet another double-decker bus parade after opening up a seven-point gap at the top of the championship with 11 games to play.

A 3-0 win over Guimaraes at the end of February was their 27th consecutive home League triumph, and became even more significant when second-placed Sporting Lisbon dropped two points on the same weekend after drawing 1-1 at Gil Vicente.

Jose Mourinho's side, still unbeaten after 23 League games, may not be playing the scintillating football that took them to last season's title, but few doubt their ability to stay top.

Sporting, meanwhile, have been boosted by the return of striker Marius Niculae after a nine-month injury absence. The Romanian made his long-awaited comeback in a 1-1 draw with Porto at the end of January.

Pedro Pinto

SWITZERLAND

Muller cuts out of Wil

Joachim Muller has become the third coach to leave Wil 1900 since former Soviet Union forward Igor Belanov took a majority stake in the struggling top division side last summer.

Muller quit after just one game of the spring campaign, a 2-0 home defeat by Thun that left them one place off the bottom. He cited the team's lack of motivation and his inability to work with Belanov, recently also elected club president, who had demanded a say in team selection.

Muller was hired from German club Chemnitzer SC in December to succeed Alexander Zavarov, who in turn took over from Martin Andermatt. The new coach is Tomasz Matejcek, from Czechs Opava. Ironically, Wil won their first game after Muller's departure, beating bottom side Neuchatel Xamax 2-0 away and bringing to an end the tenure of Xamax coach Claude Ryf. His replacement is Frenchman Rene Lobello, who recently led Tunisians Etoile Sahel to the African Cup-winners Cup.

Runaway leaders Basle were still unbeaten after 20 games, but dropped their first home points of the season when Grasshopper came from 2-0 down to snatch a draw.

Servette have been kept afloat until the end of the season after agent Marc Roger pumped £500,000 into the club.

Ivar von Rulach

Anderlecht meet their Westerlo

BELGIUM

CHAMPIONS-ELECT ANDERLECHT finally lost their 100 per cent away League record when held to a goalless draw at Westerlo. The hosts, who have just given coach Jan Ceulemans a three-year contract extension, thus also became the first League opponents this season to prevent the mauve-and-whites from scoring.

Anderlecht were still on course to win the title by a record margin, though Standard Liege trimmed their lead to 16 points after trouncing Cercle Brugge 7-0.

Marc Grosjean has become the third coach of the season at bottom side Royal Antwerp. He succeeds Serb Doy Peruzic, who in turn replaced Rene Desaeyere.

Emilio Ferrara is another coach on borrowed time following Lierse's record-breaking run of six successive draws. They then lost 3-0 at Lokeren, who have signed former Belgium keeper Filip De Wilde from Sturm Graz.

Sandy Martens was another player to change clubs, moving to Gent from Club Brugge, the side he lined up against in his first game, a 1-0 defeat.

On the international front, 17-year-old Vincent Kompany suggested he has a lengthy Belgium career ahead of him when performing promisingly during the 2-0 friendly defeat by France in February. The Anderlecht centre-back was clearly not fazed despite having been drafted into the side at very short notice.

Nicholas Harling

Piling it on...Emile Mpenza cracks home a penalty for Standard Liege during their 7-0 rout of Cercle Brugge

Low pressure

AUSTRIA

AUSTRIA WIEN COACH Joachim Low has been feeling the heat after his side's League lead was cut to one point after a shock 1-0 home defeat by Pasching.

The result, on the first day of the spring programme, prompted billionaire club president Frank Stronach to insist that sporting director Gunter Kronsteiner sits on the bench alongside Low in future.

"The sporting director is higher in the club's hierarchy than the coach," said Stronach. "Thus the director must tell Mr Low if something is going wrong."

Grazer AK took advantage of Austria's defeat, their first for four months, by winning 4-1 at Mattersburg and moving into close contention for the title.

Harry Miltner

Down the pecking order...Low

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

McGrath handed Waterford role

Twenty-two years after leaving St Patrick's Athletic for Manchester United, Paul McGrath is back in the domestic League, this time as director of football at Waterford United.

McGrath, who won 83 Republic of Ireland caps, has not worked in football since retiring in November 1998, but has been doing some media work.

Waterford chairman Ger O'Brien said: "This is not a gimmick. Paul is special and we feel he has something to offer our club."

The former United, Aston Villa, Derby and Sheffield United central defender has recently been receiving treatment for alcohol problems.

Waterford have also appointed Alan Reynolds as player-manager, to replace Jimmy McGeough.

Bohemians manager Stephen Kenny has strengthened his squad for the new season, which starts on March 19, by signing James Keddy and Tony Grant from Shamrock Rovers. Champions Shelbourne have lost the Baker brothers – Richie to US club New England Revolution and Dessie to Longford Town.

Jason McAteer, who had not figured in the national team since Mick McCarthy resigned as manager in November 2002, made a comeback in the 0-0 draw with Brazil in Dublin in February. His appearance brings to 32 the number of players used by Brian Kerr in his first 12 games in charge.

Sean Creedon

LIECHTENSTEIN

Banaczek joins Vaduz

New FC Vaduz coach Martin Andermatt has made former Polish Under-21 and Bayern Munich player David Banaczek his first signing. The 25-year-old arrives from Widzew Lodz.

Graeme Crawford

Goal galore

NORTHERN IRELAND

THERE WAS GOOD news and bad news for new national coach Lawrie Sanchez as his team ended their long, long wait for a goal but still lost 4-1 to Norway in their February friendly in Belfast. A neat David Healy header from Keith Gillespie's cross gave Northern Ireland their first goal in 1,298 minutes of football – 13 blank matches and a drought stretching back to February 2002, a European record. But although the goal was boisterously celebrated it came with the Irish 3-0 behind. Norway took full advantage of some naive defending, and rounded off the scoring when Gillespie put through his own goal just shortly after setting up Healy.

Despite the defeat, Sanchez saw encouraging signs, in particular the performance of Glentoran's bustling striker Andy Smith.

In the League, Linfield look unstoppable despite the loss of influential midfielder Phil Charnock to injury for the rest of the season. They extended their unbeaten run to 20 games with a 3-1 home win over Glenavon in late February, while second-placed Coleraine – the only side to have beaten Linfield in the League this term – lost 2-0 at Cliftonville to slip seven points behind.

Roy Kilson

Grabbing the limelight...scorer David Healy sets off on a celebration run with Northern Ireland skipper Aaron Hughes in tow

DENMARK

Squad gets Serie A boost

The Danes have drafted in three men from Serie A to boost their Euro 2004 campaign – but only one of them a player. He is Udinese defender Per Kroldrup, who made a good impression on his international debut as a substitute in the encouraging 1-0 friendly victory away to Turkey in February.

The 24-year-old appears to have catapaulted himself into the Euro 2004 squad, but the other recruits from Italy may be even more influential. They are Jens Bangbo, Marcello Lippi's Danish assistant coach at Juventus, and Milan chiropractor Johannes Breum.

"Working at two of Europe's leading clubs means they will be able to contribute valuable knowledge," said Denmark coach Morten Olsen. "And another advantage is they will probably be able to provide extra information on the Italian national team [Denmark's first opponents at Euro 2004]."

The win in Turkey was a significant boost for Olsen after the misery of the recent tour of America. Full-backs Thomas Helveg and Niclas Jensen were in particularly good form, Martin Jorgensen played well as a striker, and midfielder Claus Jensen had an outstanding game.

Reserve Denmark keeper Stephan Andersen is now being eyed up by the latter's club side, Charlton, having been voted the Superliga's best young talent of the autumn for his displays with AB Copenhagen.

Jim Holden

ESTONIA

Stepanov to Torpedo

Flora Tallinn defender Andrei Stepanov has become the second Estonian international to join Torpedo Moscow, following in the footsteps of Andres Oper, who moved to the Russian capital last summer.

Indrek Zelinski, another Estonian international, has switched Danish clubs, joining Frem from AaB Aalborg.

Andres Must

FINLAND

Long ban for Njazi

FC Lahti striker Njazi Kuqi has been suspended for five months after pushing a referee who had sent him off during a recent indoor match. The 22-year-old, younger brother of Finland and Ipswich striker Shefki Kuqi, will now miss most of the domestic season, during which he was expected to make a big impression.

"I know I did a stupid thing and I am sorry for it," said Kuqi. "I realise that I've let many people down."

Pentti Hietanen

NORWAY

Pedersen boost for Age

Age Hareide continued his winning run since becoming national coach with a 4-1 win over Northern Ireland in Belfast. It came on the back of Norway's three wins on their recent Far-east Asia trip and re-emphasised the new positive belief Hareide has instilled in the squad.

The coach surprisingly gave debutant Gamst Pedersen a starting role in Belfast, but the young Tromso striker quickly repaid Hareide's belief in him by scoring Norway's first two goals.

Steffen Iversen, struggling to get a regular place at Wolverhampton, showed again that he has a lot to offer the national side. He scored the third goal, while a Keith Gillespie own goal completed the scoring.

At home, Brann bucked the trend to rely more on home-grown talent by signing Australian striker Dylan Macallister.

Sigurd Odegaard

ICELAND

KR take capital prize

There was a definite hint of deja vu about this year's Reykjavik Cup Final, as League champions KR once again got the better of perennial also-rans Fylkir, by the odd goal in seven.

However, KR lost in the semi-finals of the inaugural Iceland Express Cup, 2-1 to Swedes Orgryte, who then saw off Icelandic Cup holders IA 3-1 in the Final.

A mooted return to a 12-team Premier League came a step closer after the FA agreed to examine the issue more closely. The increase from the current 10-team division could be in place as early as 2005.

Rab Christie

WALES

Barry win at last

Defending champions Barry Town finally won their first League game of the season, at their 22nd attempt, when beating fellow strugglers Welshpool Town 5-4 in late February.

Meanwhile, the club have appointed ex-Atletico Madrid and Derby manager Colin Addison as director of football, with David Hughes dropping to assistant.

Caernarfon Town, seventh after 24 games, sacked manager Adie Jones following a run of bad results.

Robert Earnshaw hit a hat-trick in Wales' 4-0 win over Scotland in Cardiff, the first Welsh international to achieve the feat since Ian Rush in 1992.

Mel Thomas

Race against time...Hedman

Hedman faces fitness battle

SWEDEN

NATIONAL TEAM GOALKEEPER Magnus Hedman is facing a battle to be fit for Euro 2004 after undergoing a second groin operation within a year.

The surgery is the latest event in what has been a difficult spell for the 31-year-old. Having been Sweden's undisputed No 1 at the 2002 World Cup finals he has recently lost his first-team place to Andreas Isaksson after suffering injuries and shaky form at Celtic. Hedman moved on loan to Serie A side Ancona during the winter transfer window and suffered a nightmare start by conceding a first-minute goal on his debut.

A makeshift national team lost 2-1 away to Albania in their February friendly, showing there is still plenty to be done before the European Championship this summer.

"The timing of the match was not very good," said national coach Tommy Soderberg. "We were without several key players, while we had to play a couple of players whom we would have wanted to rest."

Sweden's lack of an established striker is an increasing concern, making the calls for Henrik Larsson to return from international retirement all the more urgent.

As one local columnist put it: "What would be the best cure to Sweden's current lightweight attack? In three words: 'Henrik Larsson, please!' "

Pentti Hietanen

Vogts hits new low

SCOTLAND

SCOTLAND'S INTERNATIONAL STOCK, which suffered a hefty fall following the 6-0 Euro 2004 humiliation at the hands of Holland last November, sunk even further with the 4-0 friendly defeat by Wales in Cardiff in February.

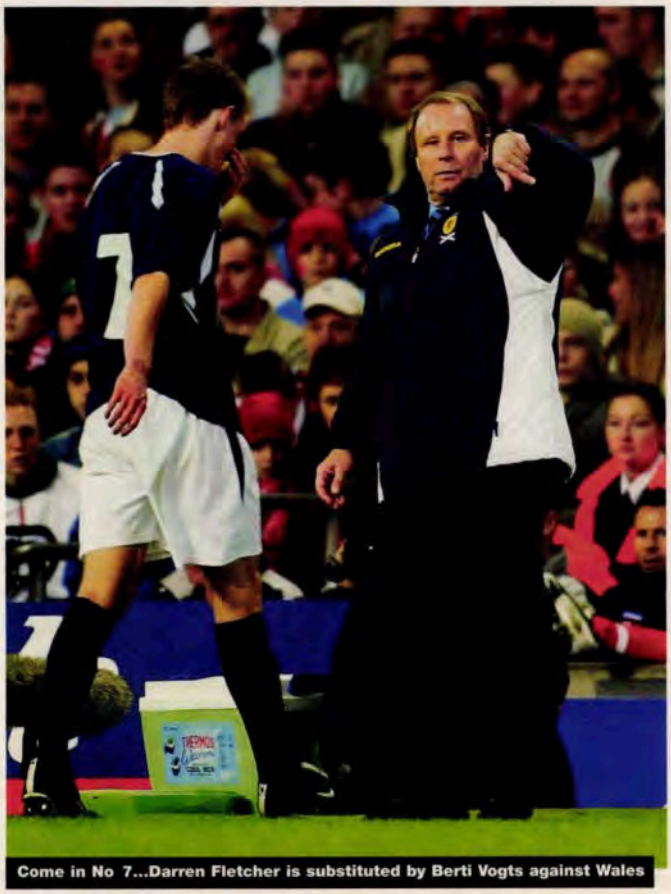
It was the Scots' heaviest loss to the Welsh in 103 meetings and came despite their hosts being without first-choice forwards John Hartson and Craig Bellamy.

National coach Berti Vogts admitted afterwards he had considered resigning, but now appears determined to see out the remaining two years of his contract. He clearly has much rebuilding to do before the 2006 World Cup qualifiers kick-off in September.

On the domestic front, champions-elect Celtic set a record when beating Partick Thistle 4-1 away on February 22. The victory was their 24th in a row in the League, beating the previous best by Morton 40 years ago.

Partick's line-up included one-time Celtic hero Jorge Cadete, the Portuguese striker having made a surprise return to Scotland in a short-term deal with the Premier League strugglers.

Alan Fairley



Come in No 7...Darren Fletcher is substituted by Berti Vogts against Wales

Hassan gets the hump

TURKEY

Sit-down protest...Hassan is upset that he starts most games on the bench rather than on the pitch

DISGRUNTLED BESIKTAS MIDFIELDER Ahmed Hassan has threatened to quit the club over a lack of first-team action in a move that typifies the current malaise within the defending champions' camp.

The Egyptian international's excellent form for Genclerbirligi last season sparked off a bidding war over the summer, with Besiktas beating off their title rivals for his signature. But despite producing some key performances Hassan is rarely handed a starting berth by coach Mircea Lucescu.

Reports of clashes between the two men had been seeping out for some time, but the row reached a head when Hassan was quoted on an Egyptian website saying: "I'm not a player to sit on the bench. I'm leaving Besiktas at the end of the season. I don't know why I'm not being played and I cannot stomach being a substitute."

The board promptly warned him about his behaviour; vice-chairman Husnu Gureli suggested the club would agree to his departure as long as a buyer put up £2.75million.

Since then Hassan has softened his line, saying Lucescu – whom he called "the bravest and most straight-talking man in the world" – knew best how to employ his skills as a player. Lucescu, for his part, said he felt Hassan performed much better when he came on later in games than from the kick-off. This belief appeared to be borne out when the Egyptian failed to deliver as a starter in the late February home game against Istanbulspor. Besiktas lost 2-1, allowing Fenerbahce – victors by the same scoreline over a decidedly ailing Galatasaray – to take over from them on goal difference at the top.

Such a scenario seemed implausible at the winter break, with the Black Eagles holding a nine-point lead over the chasing pack. Since then, however, the camp has been simmering with unease. A number of important players are reportedly unhappy and Turkey striker Ilhan Mansiz has already left, for Japanese club Vissel Kobe.

Despite the ructions at Besiktas, the most dramatic story of recent weeks was the broad daylight shooting of outspoken commentator and former referee Ahmet Cakar by a gunman bearing a bouquet of flowers. Cakar survived but he appeared to have been tempting fate when, in his last interview before the shooting, he had defied his enemies by saying: "What's the worst they can do? Let them try to kill me if they dare."

The Turkish media is trawling his many offensive comments in a bid to find out who he might have upset the most. Meanwhile, if Cakar has any suspicions about his assailant's identity, he is keeping them to himself.

Suna Erdem

CROATIA

Fighting mars friendly

The volatile atmosphere between Dinamo Zagreb and Hajduk Split showed no sign of calming, with hostilities both on and off the pitch during a recent 'friendly' tournament in the Bosnian town of Siroki Brijeg.

Rival sets of fans fought in the streets ahead of the Final between the two clubs, while there were also fireworks among the players. The situation reached a head when Dinamo vice-president Zdravko Mamic protested against the dismissal of Edin Mujcin by running on to the pitch and taking the team back to the dressing-room. Later, Mamic claimed that he stopped the match because a knife had been thrown at one of the Dinamo players. But though this was true, the incident had occurred 20 minutes earlier.

Croatia lost their home February friendly 2-1 to Germany but there was compensation in the fact that Werder Bremen forward Ivan Klasnic made his debut for the hosts. The 24-year-old opted to play for Croatia, the homeland of his parents, despite the fact he was born in Hamburg, plays in Germany and had received an offer to join the German international set-up.

Zdravko Reic

SLOVENIA

Bracun breaks under strain

Croat coach Milivoj Bracun has quit Koper despite the team being second in the table because of tensions caused by financial concerns. "We are in second position, three points behind leaders Gorica, and with a real chance to go for the championship, but the climate in the club has become unbearable," said Bracun. "The players are practically at war with the management because of growing debts, and I simply was not able to stay there any more."

Zdravko Reic

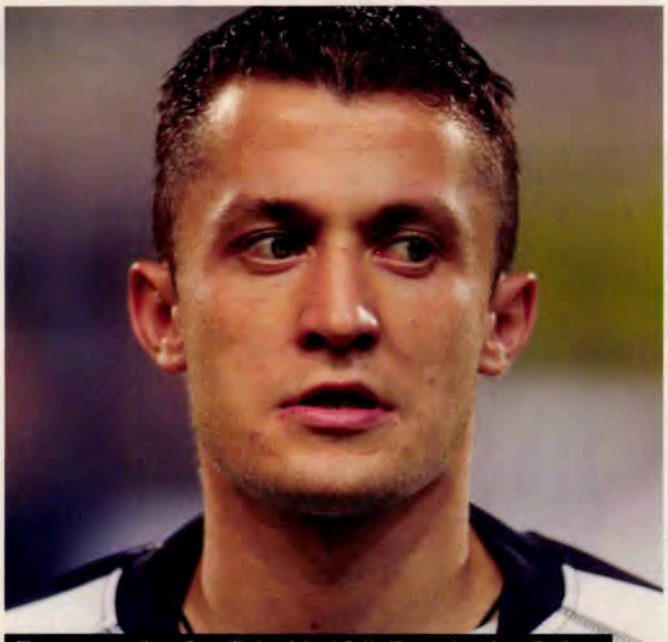
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Serbs show well

The national team lost 1-0 away to Macedonia in February, but there were promising debuts from three Serb players – Zvejzdan Misimovic (Bayern Munich), Ninislav Milenkovic and Dusan Kerkez (both Leotar).

However, stalwart defender Mirsad Hibic, 30, has said he is quitting international football.

Zdravko Reic



There goes another...Sasa Ilic has joined Celta Vigo on loan from Partizan

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Depart-izan

PARTIZAN BELGRADE players Sasa Ilic and Igor Duljaj followed Mallorca-bound striker Andrija Delibasic out of the club during the winter break, bringing to six the number of regulars to have departed the defending champions in the past nine months.

Partizan trailed League leaders Red Star by three points at the winter break, and, given the exodus, it will be some feat if they manage to overall their city rivals and retain the title they have won for the past two seasons.

Ilic, Partizan's captain and playmaker, has moved to Celta Vigo on loan, while tireless midfielder Igor Duljaj has joined Shakhtar Donetsk in a five-year deal.

Red Star, meanwhile, could well be without international midfielder Nenad Kovacevic for the rest of the League campaign because of his heart problem. The 23-year-old collapsed after a League game in October, but following a series of tests had been expected to return to action after the winter break. However, his comeback has been postponed for another three months.

The start of the spring campaign was overshadowed by crowd trouble. A 20-year-old was stabbed and seriously injured during a fight between two rival Partizan gangs in Cacak where the champions were playing Borac. Meanwhile, in Belgrade, Zemun hooligans forced the game against Vojvodina to be held up after they threw flares at visiting fans and ran on to the pitch.

Vladimir Novak

MACEDONIA

Wait for win is over

The national team recorded their first win for six months when defeating Bosnia-Herzegovina 1-0 in a friendly in Skopje in February. The goal came from Goran Pandev, the Ancona striker set to join Lazio in the summer.

Defending champions Vardar have signed 20-year-old Belasica forward Danco Masev on a four-year contract in their bid to put in a title challenge. Vardar were four points behind leaders Pobeda at the winter break.

International defender Igor Mitreski has given up in his quest to find an English club, signing a new three-year deal with current side Moscow Spartak.

Michel Stojmanovski

MALTA

Sliema in pole position

Title holders Sliema Wanderers led the pack at the start of the championship play-offs, kicking off with 21 points, three more than nearest challengers Birkirkara. Teams carry forward half the points gained during the regular season.

While Sliema have been boosted by the prolific goalscoring of international forward Michael Mifsud since his return from Germany, Birkirkara were set to welcome back skipper Antoine Zahra after a long injury lay-off.

Hibernians, Marsaxlokk, Floriana and Pieta Hotspurs complete the championship play-offs line-up.

The national team finished third as hosts in the Rothmans international tournament, having beaten Estonia 5-2, drawn 0-0 with Moldova but lost 4-0 to a Belarus Select side. The latter won the competition on goal difference from Estonia.

League top scorer Etienne Barbara scored twice in the latter game, while Stephen Wellman and Cleavan Frendo both made their debuts during the tournament.

Domenico Aquilina

ISRAEL

Home sweet home for Shlomi

The national team recorded an easy 6-0 win over Azerbaijan in their February friendly, in what was the first international played in Israel for almost a year. Recent 'home' ties have been played on neutral grounds because of security concerns within the country.

Young Beitar Jerusalem striker Shlomi Arbeitman scored a hat-trick against the Azeris and looks destined for a great future at international level. The 18-year-old was among a number of young players introduced by coach Avraham Grant with the 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign in mind.

A 22-year-old Hapoel Tel Aviv fan received a severe head injury from an exploding flare before the start of the derby against Maccabi.

On the pitch, Maccabi Haifa have emerged as favourites to regain the Premier League title they lost last season to Maccabi Tel Aviv after putting together a string of wins.

Ori Lewis

Nikolaidis to take AEK stake

GREECE

INTERNATIONAL STRIKER DEMIS NIKOLAIDIS has announced he is part of a consortium that has agreed to the purchase of AEK Athens, his financially-troubled former club.

The statement, made on the Atletico Madrid forward's personal website, said a deal had been reached with AEK's major shareholder, British firm ENIC, and that the contract would be signed soon.

The agreement calls for the new investors to put some £3.5million into the team's coffers immediately. Local press reports have estimated AEK's total debts to top £14m.

Nikolaidis spent eight seasons at the club before joining Atletico last summer.

Meanwhile, AEK have appointed ex-Romanian international Ilie Dumitrescu as coach. The 35-year-old replaces Dusan Bayevic, who resigned recently, and takes charge until the end of this season with an option to stay on for another year. Dumitrescu was most recently in charge of Apollon Limassol in Cyprus.

Lou Economopoulos

Money man...Demis Nikolaidis

Munteanu banned from national team

ROMANIA

FOUR STEAUA BUCHAREST players, including 118-times-capped Dorinel Munteanu, have been banned indefinitely from the national team by the FA after refusing to meet a deadline to join up with the squad.

Romania coach Anghel Iordanescu had called on his squad to gather six days before they were due to meet Georgia in their first game at the recent Cyprus international tournament. However, the Steaua quartet – midfielder Munteanu, forward Nicolae Dica and defenders Mirel Radoi and Florentin Dumitru – said they would arrive only two days before the game because of club training commitments.

Alongside the bans, Romania's Professional Soccer League fined Steaua a record £3,500 for not releasing the players in time.

The traditional winter coaching cull saw the end of no fewer than seven reigns, and one of the replacements, Italian Niccolo Napoli, was fired by Universitatea Craiova after just two months. Among the other new arrivals, former international Ionut Lupescu has taken charge at Bacau, while Razvan Lucescu – son of Besiktas coach Mircea – is in place at Brasov.

Radu Timofte

Kicked out...Munteanu has paid a high price for ignoring a Romania call-up

SLOVAKIA

Martin quick off the mark

Martin Jakubko, League leaders Banska Bystrica's big winter signing, got off to a flying start by scoring twice on his debut, a 5-0 thrashing of Trencin. The forward joined Banska after hitting 13 goals for Second Division Presov during the first half of the season.

There was a flurry of activity at struggling Slovan Bratislava in the final few days of the winter transfer window, with eight players joining the squad. The most notable arrival was national team goalkeeper Branislav Rzeszoto, who has joined from champions Zilina on a six-month loan.

Slovan striker Stanislav Sestak surprisingly made the reverse journey. The 22-year-old had already begun winter training with Czechs Synot having made a preliminary deal with that club, but turned his back on them to join Zilina on a two-and-a-half-year contract.

Ed Holt

Romantsev rockets away from Saturn

My way or else...Romantsev was at loggerheads with Saturn's shareholders

RUSSIA

OLEG ROMANTSEV SURPRISED Russian football by quitting as coach of Saturn Ramenskoye less than a month before the start of the new Premiere League season. The former national team and Moscow Spartak boss cited poor health as the reason for his departure, but many attribute it to the coach's conflict with the Saturn shareholders over his transfer policy.

Romantsev had decided to get rid of a number of expensive foreign imports as he prepared for the new season, which reportedly enraged the shareholders, who claimed their opinions were being neglected.

The 50-year-old was appointed by Saturn last September, just two months before the end of the season, as replacement for Vitaly Shevchenko. However, the new man did little to alter the club's mediocre results and they finished only seventh in the League.

Romantsev is by far Russia's most prominent coach, having led Spartak to nine League titles in 12 years. However, he was fired by the red-and-whites last June following a spat with club president Andrei Chervichenko. He quit as Russia boss after failing to take the team past the first-round stage at the 2002 World Cup.

Romantsev's replacement is Boris Ignatiev, another former national team boss. The 63-year-old has recently been sports director at Lokomotiv Moscow, but has never taken charge of a top-division club. His salary is £110,000 a year, "much less than Romantsev's" according to a source within the Russian hierarchy.

Victor Gusev

UKRAINE

Blokhin: 'Limit the foreigners'

National coach Oleg Blokhin has called for a limit to be imposed on the number of foreigners at domestic clubs, believing that they are preventing young Ukrainian players from breaking through.

"We have a good generation of young and promising players, but they don't have the chance to play in their teams," said the former Soviet Union forward. "Take the very talented Adrian Pukanych from Shakhtar. The most important thing he needs is match practice. But Shakhtar purchased Serbian Zvonimir Vukic last year [to play in Pukanych's position] and closed out a potentially regular Ukraine international. We need urgently to impose a limit on foreigners."

Ukraine drew 1-1 with Libya in Tripoli – their first match of the year and their second since Blokhin took the reins. The coach introduced three newcomers – defender Vyacheslav Checher from Metalurh Donetsk and forwards Taras Kabanov (Karpaty) and Konstantyn Balabanov (Chornomorets).

Oleg Kononov, former coach of Torpedo Minsk in Belarus, has taken charge of Metalurh Zaporizhzhya. He succeeds Mykhailo Fomenko, who resigned at the end of January.

Former Kyiv Dynamo and Werder Bremen midfielder Yurii Maxymov has returned home to join Borysfen, Dnipro signed Dynamo forward Olexander Melaschenko, Russian midfielder Alexei Saveliev joined Vorskla from Anzhi Makhachkala, and Serbia & Montenegro midfielder Igor Duljaj moved to Shakhtar from Partizan Belgrade.

Oleg Zadernovsky

CZECH REPUBLIC

Banik bite back

The press billed the spring League campaign 'the hunt for Banik', but after two rounds it was the hunter rather than the prey showing signs of weakness. While leaders Banik Ostrava made a confident start after the winter break, beating Slovan Liberec 2-0 away, closest challengers Sparta Prague muddled through 4-3 at Opava and were then held 0-0 at home by Pribram.

Sparta were expected to step up a gear after their winter signings of Teplice midfielder Petr Vorisek and on-loan Hannover striker Jiri Stajner. However, Banik, who made no major winter signings, were still six points clear of the defending champions and with a game in hand after their second match was postponed because of snow.

Even worse for Sparta was that city rivals Slavia drew level after successive wins under new coach Josef Csaplar.

At the bottom of the table, village team Chmel Blsany made a victorious return from exile in Pribram, beating Viktoria Zizkov 1-0 in their first game at the newly-reconstructed Na Litavce stadium. The victory pulled them to within one point of Zizkov.

The national team needed a late Tomas Rosicky goal to rescue their unbeaten record under Karel Bruckner in a 2-2 draw with Italy in Sicily. Jiri Stajner scored the Czechs' other goal.

Bruckner singled out debutants Vaclav Drobny and David Rozehnal for praise for helping to patch together an injury-depleted defence, while Karel Poborsky surpassed Zdenek Nehoda's Czech international appearance record when picking up his 91st cap.

Sam Beckwith

BULGARIA

Coach thrown off leaders Lokomotiv

League leaders Lokomotiv Plovdiv have surprisingly told coach Eduard Eranosyan his services are no longer required. Owner Georgi Iliev said the decision was in the best interests of the club, despite Lokomotiv winning their last game under Eranosyan 1-0 at home to Makedonska to stay three points clear of Levski Sofia.

Defending champions CSKA were third after 17 rounds having drawn one game and won another under new coach Ferario Spasov. The former Litex Lovech boss replaced Alexander Stankov, who resigned early in February.

Ljubo Petrovic, who led Red Star Belgrade to the 1991 European Cup, has taken the reins at Lovech until the end of the season. Former head coach Dragolub Simonovic drops to assistant.

Michael Bowesfield

HUNGARY

Plus points for Lothar

National coach Lothar Matthaus was upbeat after Hungary finished runners-up to Romania, 3-0 Final victors, in February's eight-team Cyprus international tournament.

"We came here to win but I'm proud of my players," said the German, who was overseeing his first games in charge and was clearly keen to fit in having learnt the words to the national anthem. "We won our first two matches, then for 70 minutes took the game to Romania. I'm convinced we have the makings of a good side."

Goals by Bundesliga stars Imre Szabics and Krisztian Lisztes sealed a 2-0 win in Hungary's opening game, against Armenia, for which Matthaus dropped out-of-form Hertha Berlin keeper Gabor Kiraly and snubbed ageing Ferencvaros midfielder Peter Lipcsei.

Ferencvaros forward Zoltan Gera became Hungary's youngest-ever captain for the semi-final against Latvia, and the 24-year-old led the side – by now deprived of their key overseas-based players – to a come-from-behind 2-1 win.

Peterjon Cresswell

GEORGIA

Byshovets takes charge

Former Russia coach Anatoliy Byshovets has been handed the national team reins and will lead Georgia through the World Cup qualifying campaign. The former Kyiv Dynamo player saw off a number of other leading candidates, including Frenchman Henry Michel, Argentinian Mario Kempes and Slovenian Srecko Katanec.

Oleg Zadernovsky

On target...Kryszalowicz hit four goals against the Faroe Islands

Seven up in Spain

POLAND

THE NATIONAL TEAM extended their winning run to seven games with two comfortable victories in February friendlies, played in San Fernando, Spain. Both goals in the 2-0 win over Slovenia came from substitutes – Sebastian Mila and Andrzej Niedzielan – while Pawel Kryszalowicz scored four in the 6-0 demolition of the Faroe Islands three days later.

Leaders Wisla Krakow strengthened their title bid with a raft of winter signings – Poland keeper Radoslaw Majdan from Israel's SC Ashdod, defenders Tomasz Klos (Koln), Jacek Kowalczyk (Katowice) and Serb Nikola Mijailovic (Zeleznik), and midfielder Mariusz Kukielka (Nurnberg). In addition, Nigerian midfielder Kalu Uche is back in the fold after a six-month disciplinary ban and has now extended his contract until June 2008.

Wisla's two closest rivals simply could not compete with them in the market. Amica Wronki signed only forward Zbigniew Grzybowski from Wacker Burghausen, while Legia Warsaw lost Serb top scorer Stanko Svitlica to Hannover 96.

Dariusz Kurowski

Bilardo loses it

ARGENTINA

THE SANITY OF ESTUDIANTES coach Carlos Bilardo has been called into question after his bizarre behaviour created the backdrop to his side losing their first two closing championship games.

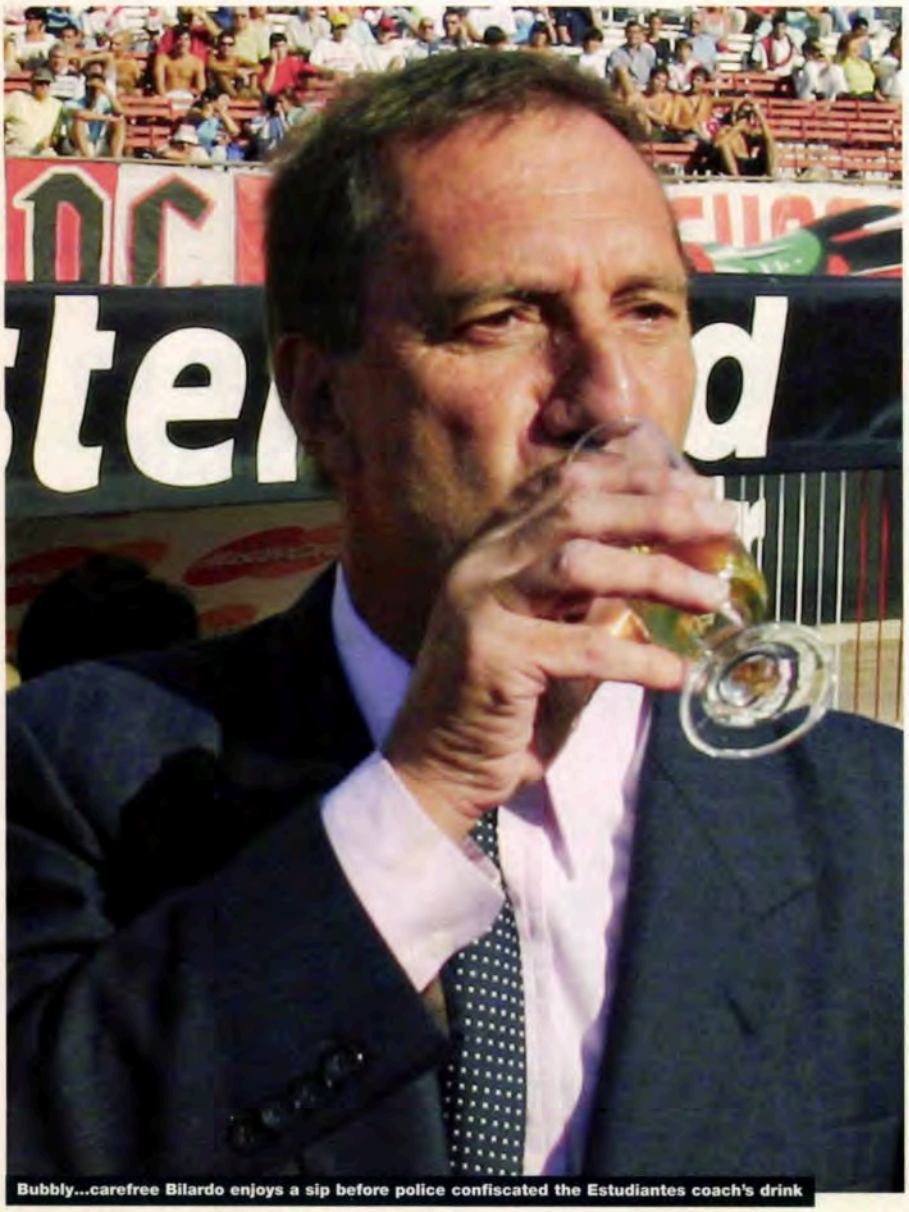
The alarm bells began to ring after the former Argentina boss put his squad through an 11-hour training session, conducted to pop music, ahead of their home opening match against Independiente. Estudiantes promptly lost 4-1.

But people thought Bilardo had really lost his marbles when he took his place on the bench for the second match, at River Plate – behind a little table on which he had placed a radio and a champagne bottle in an ice-bucket.

At half-time police officers attempted and eventually succeeded in taking the bottle away from him as it is now forbidden to take alcohol into stadiums. All the commotion prevented the coach from giving his half-time team talk and Estudiantes duly lost 3-0.

Bilardo, who led Argentina to World Cup triumph in 1986, created his picnic scene in response to criticism from former international goalkeeper Hugo Gatti that he was taking the game too seriously and would die alongside his tactics blackboard.

Bilardo said: "I came to enjoy a bit of soccer and they wanted to throw me out. The bottle only had [sports drink] Gatorade and water in it.



Bubbly...carefree Bilardo enjoys a sip before police confiscated the Estudiantes coach's drink

"I'm not interested in tactics any more, but will continue to coach. The boys can play and improvise things on the field. I'm having fun. I don't know about the Estudiantes fans. Football is supposed to be fun. I don't care about having conceded seven goals in two games. Now I look at football in a different way."

River have introduced a novel training technique of their own – playing with rugby balls – but given their result against Estudiantes it is proving more useful than Bilardo's innovation.

River trainer Flavio Perez says: "It makes the players use different body movements and get used to the strange bounce of the ball. At the same time it's a lot of fun."

Fernando Cavenaghi scored twice against Estudiantes, with the other goal coming from Chilean veteran Marcelo Salas, who missed most of the opening tournament through injury.

While River will have been grateful to keep hold of Cavenaghi, their prime playing asset, they have sold three other prominent young players – Alejandro Dominguez, Guillermo Pereyra and Osmar Ferreyra. The club pocketed £6 million from the transfers, but they raise questions about whether River are more interested in winning titles or making money.

Ferreyra, for example, may have played only 16 games in River's first team, but he has shown his great potential for both Argentina's Under-20 team at last year's World Youth Cup and the Under-23 side that have qualified for this year's Olympics.

Boca Juniors, River's great rivals, have unearthed a new young talent of their own. Neri Cardozo, a 17-year-old introduced from the club's junior ranks, scored both goals in Boca's 2-1 win away to Rosario Central on the second closing campaign weekend.

Meanwhile, joining Boca's youth ranks on trial is Kenny Valderrama, the 16-year-old son of former Colombian international Carlos, who has just come out of retirement to play for Union Magdalena in his homeland.

Americo Gallego has become the eighth coach in the current championship to lead a club he played for after replacing Hector Viera at Newell's Old Boys. Viera quit because he said he was tired of fans insulting him, though he was also known to have had a difficult relationship with club president Hector Lopez. The other old boys in charge are: Bilardo, Leonardo Astrada (River Plate), Ubaldo Fillol (Racing Club), Jorge Burruchaga (Arsenal), Jose Pastoriza (Independiente), Nestor Gorosito (San Lorenzo) and Carlos Ischia (Velez Sarsfield).

Talleres Cordoba, who are struggling in the relegation averages table, were the only team to win their first three games. Velez, joint second, have enticed former player Jose Luis Chilavert out of retirement, though the veteran Paraguayan keeper will only play for them in the Libertadores Cup.

Eric Weil

Hands up, who's qualified...Mexico's Under-23s salute their progress to the Athens Olympics

Lavolpe boosted by kids

MEXICO

RICARDO LAVOLPE BOLSTERED his position as national coach after the Under-23 side qualified for this year's Olympics with an excellent showing in the CONCACAF qualifiers. Mexico thrashed the United States 4-0 in the semi-finals and outclassed a defensive Costa Rica team – who also qualify – in the Final, though they still needed a golden goal to clinch the tournament win.

Lavolpe has come in for criticism from fans and media after a string of mediocre performances by the senior national team.

There was a surprising start to the closing championship, with unheralded sides Jaguares and San Luis racking up the points after six games by playing attacking, entertaining soccer.

There have already been two coaching changes. Alfredo Tena was fired after just three games, all draws, by Gallos Blancos, with ex-Toluca boss Osvaldo Batocletti taking over. Ruben Omar Romano resigned at Morelia after his side, championship finalists twice during his reign, took only two points from six games. Antonio Mohamed, a former Atlante and Toros Neza player, is the new boss, arriving from Second Division Zacatepec.

Carlos Ramirez

Yallop's aim: more goals

CANADA

THE NATIONAL TEAM scored only twice in eight games during their failed attempt to reach the 2002 World Cup; new coach Frank Yallop knows a much better return will be needed if they are to make the next finals.

Yallop has already taken steps to boost his firepower, recalling Sheffield United's in-form Paul Peschisolido, the second-highest scorer among current internationals with nine goals. Current top scorer is Carlo Corazzin, now at Vancouver Whitecaps, who took his Canada tally to 10 when scoring the only goal of the coach's debut, against Barbados in January.

Other striking options include Everton's Tomasz Radzinski, Dwayne De Rosario of San Jose Earthquakes, Iain Hume of English Second Division side Tranmere, and Hearts' Kevin McKenna.

Philippe Germain

Total recall...Paul Peschisolido

ROUND-UP

● CONMEBOL: Nicolas Leoz was re-elected president of the South American confederation until 2006 at its February congress. Argentinian FA president Julio Grondona was unanimously re-elected as CONMEBOL'S FIFA vice-president, a position he has already held for the past 16 years. There was also confirmation that the confederation will back Brazil to host the 2014 World Cup.

● URUGUAY: The start date of the national championship, scheduled for February 28, was put back for two weeks to allow time for negotiations as players threatened to go on strike for more money. The players, some of whom receive less than £30 a month, are demanding a minimum salary of £220 for First Division players and half as much in the Second Division. They also threatened that if no solution was found, the internationals among them would refuse to play in Uruguay's World Cup qualifier against Venezuela on March 31.

Nacional, who lost to Penarol in the championship play-off last year, have replaced coach Daniel Carena with Santiago Ostolaza.

● PERU: Alianza Lima, the leaders of the closing championship when it was suspended last November, have belatedly won the overall 2003 championship. They beat opening title winners Sporting Cristal 2-1 after extra-time in a play-off.

● CHILE: A linesman was knocked out by a stone thrown from the crowd during an opening championship match between Union Espanola and Universidad de Chile. Play was suspended for five minutes while the official was given medical attention.

● ECUADOR: The Argentinian influence in domestic soccer is growing, with five of the 10 top division teams starting the season under coaches from that country. There has also been an influx of Argentinian players. Deportivo Quito signed Walter Coyette, Christian Carnero and Hector Almandoz, Barcelona took Jose Chatruc and Roberto Trotta, Emelec got Juan Azconzabal, Diego Bustos and Ruben Ferrer, and promoted Olmedo signed Dario Parisi, Alex Rodriguez and Pablo Cantero.

However, the biggest signings were two veterans – international midfielder Alex Aguinaga, who joined champions LDU Quito from Mexico's Cruz Azul, and former Colombia keeper Rene Higuita, now at Aucas from another Mexican club, Morelia.

● COLOMBIA: Omar Lopez Robayo, the founder of the Centauros club, was shot dead along with two other people while watching his team play.

On the same day, Eduardo Davila Armenta, president of Union Magdalena, was shot and injured and one of his bodyguards was killed. Until recently, Armenta had been under house arrest after police found two tons of marijuana at his home.

Eric Weil

In search of Hispanics

Paul Gardner decries the Euro-centric nature of MLS as it prepares to kick-off the 2004 season

USA

THERE'S NO LACK of sincerity in MLS commissioner Don Garber's new-found crusade for his League. "We realise that over the last couple of years we haven't done enough to connect closely with Hispanics at all levels," he says. "Our future is to connect with those fans, those soccer communities, and bring them into the American family of soccer. We've got to go out and find the young Hispanic players who are currently outside our system."

But Garber's problem is that he has no deep understanding of the sport. If he had, he would be aware his brave words are being repeatedly undermined by action within his own League.

A team controlled by a European coach will play European soccer and will prefer European players. All 10 MLS teams are currently coached by European or pro-European coaches. The discovery of Hispanic talent that Garber refers to is unlikely to happen as long as they run things.

What has been happening in Dallas is a good indicator. The city has a big Hispanic population which, in the past, has given local side Burn substantial support. But last season the team came under new management, who decided to play home games at a high school stadium in Southlake, away from the downtown Orange Bowl. Hispanic support tapered away, the move was a disaster, and this season an embarrassed Burn have crawled back to their old home.

But another move to the suburbs is going to happen next year, to a new stadium in Frisco. This time the Hispanics will have two reasons for not going. It is 28 miles from downtown Dallas, and there appears a determined campaign on the part of Burn's new coach, Colin Clarke, to rid the team of Hispanic players.

There were eight in 2002, now there is just one, plus two young untried college players. The purge should surprise no one. Clarke, the assistant coach during last year's debacle, is from Northern Ireland, and anyone who expects a coach from that background to go with Hispanics is dreaming. In fact, the local Spanish-language press has accused him of favouring non-Hispanics, and while Clarke has denied it, he has signed only non-Hispanics since his appointment.

An even more blatant slap in the face for the Hispanic audience was delivered in Los Angeles. This is a city with a huge Mexican-American population who love their soccer. Yet Galaxy, the local team, have a Germany-born coach, Sigi Schmid, and a German advisor in Jurgen Klinsmann, who lives in the area.

The first fruit of the Sigi-Jurgen partnership was the signing of 35-year-old Austrian Andreas Herzog – a player, it's a safe bet to say, who means absolutely nothing to 99 per cent of the area's Hispanic fans. Indeed, a player who has not played a game since May 2003, and whom Galaxy did not scout. They simply took Klinsmann's word for his current ability.

As a sop to Hispanic fans, Galaxy appointed Mexico-born Martin Vazquez, a former US national team player, as assistant coach. It is an appointment that has a decidedly token appearance to it. Even so, it is more than can usually be expected.

Wall-to-wall Europeans

In Dallas, Clarke appointed compatriot Steve Morrow as his assistant. DC United, who have a tradition of success involving Hispanic players, now have Pole Peter Nowak as their coach. Nowak has chosen non-Hispanics as his assistants and has also released Honduran Milton Reyes, one of the more exciting defenders in the League.

Champions San Jose Earthquakes also have a new coach – Scotland-born Dominic Kinnear – and neither of his assistants is Hispanic. In Boston, New England Revolution are under Scot Steve Nicol, who has made ex-England striker Paul Mariner his assistant. And to complete the rout, the only Hispanic general manager – Chile-born Andy Swift – has been fired by Burn.

It all paints a bleak picture, but there is some hope. Mexican millionaire Jorge Vergara is riding to the rescue with plans to start a team next year. A large part of Garber's enthusiasm for the Hispanic approach no doubt comes from Vergara. "He exudes soccer passion. He will add real spirit and drama to MLS," says the commissioner, who has been used to dealing with low-key, undemonstrative owners like Phil Anschutz and Lamar Hunt.

Vergara already owns Mexico's most popular team, Guadalajara (known as Chivas). His aim is to create a Chivas-USA with the accent firmly on Hispanic coaches and players. Because of MLS restrictions on foreigners, most of the players would have to be American citizens, but Vergara is committed to finding the America-born Hispanics of whom Garber talks. A quest to which the current MLS coaches have paid no more than lip service.

Man on a mission...Garber wants to revive Hispanic interest in MLS

MLS 2004 – TEAM BY TEAM

Bright spot...New England's Pat Noonan

CHICAGO FIRE

2003 was a case of so near and yet so far for new coach Dave Sarachan. Fire reached the MLS Cup Final, the championship decider, but were then outplayed by San Jose. Veteran keeper Zach Thornton is now at Benfica, but his replacement – D J Countess (from Dallas) – is another good young American keeper. Defender Carlos Bocanegra has also gone (to Fulham), but mazy dribbler DaMarcus Beasley is still around to torment opponents, as is consistent scorer Ante Razov.

● The team will again be serious contenders.

Teen idol...Freddy Adu

COLORADO RAPIDS

Rapids finished only third in the Western Conference last year and inconsistency is likely to afflict them this term, too. Veteran defender Robin Fraser has gone, but little else has changed. Much will depend on the form of Pablo Mastroeni, who had a disappointing 2003, and on last year's major signing, Jamaican Darryl Powell (from Derby County), who arrived injured and played little. Last year's tally of only 40 goals in 30 games is evidence of a major scoring problem.

● Doubts about the team's consistency suggest another so-so season.

COLUMBUS CREW

Plenty of team changes, but will they show more style than hard graft? Brian McBride has moved to Fulham, Brian West to Frederikstad in Norway, and lively Guatemalan Freddy Garcia has not been re-signed. Midfield workhorse Simon Elliott arrives from Los Angeles, along with playmaker Manny Lagos from San Jose and 37-year-old defender Robin Fraser from Colorado. Crew need a good season from midfielder Kyle Martino, hailed as a boy-wonder two seasons ago, but whose career has yet to take off.

● Another barren season will probably cost coach Greg Andrulis his job – and he lacks the sort of playmaker that could bring success.

DALLAS BURN

Last year Burn won only six out of 30 games, conceding 64 goals. Coach Colin Clarke has concentrated on shoring up the defence by signing the likes of 24-year-old Cory Gibbs, who has been playing in the German Third Division.

● The most to be hoped for is that Burn can be 'difficult to beat'.

DC UNITED

United are looking for a rebirth under new coach Peter Nowak and nothing has

Sidelined...Preki

been lost with the departure of Bulgarians Hristo Stoichkov and Galin Ivanov. However, the retirement of the commanding, skilful Marco Etcheverry leaves a gap. All eyes are on teenage sensation Freddy Adu, but how much playing time can a lightly-built 14-year-old expect to get? For the moment 20-year-old Bobby Convey looks the pick of the bunch here.

● The players are there for a title run, even without a major contribution from Freddy Adu.

KANSAS CITY WIZARDS

Preki inspired Wizards to the semi-finals last year, winning the League's Most Valuable Player award along the way. However, the 40-year-old midfielder will be out for up to four months after breaking a leg pre-season. Without him there is little midfield experience. Russian Igor Simutenkov returns up front, but Josh Wolff is the more dangerous forward.

● The loss of Preki has probably scuppered any chance of a title run.

LOS ANGELES GALAXY

Coach Sigi Schmid retained his job, but only just, after his team were mauled by San Jose in last season's play-offs. Rumour has it that Galaxy will be a much more offensive team this term. Cobi Jones is back, after agreeing to a pay cut, while one 35-year-old – veteran Austrian midfielder Andreas Herzog – has replaced another – Mauricio Cienfuegos, now retired. South Korean defender Hong Myung-bo is also 35 – and looked it far too often last season. Forward Jovan Kirovski has returned from Europe, but defender Alexi Lalas has retired (again!) to become the general manager at San Jose.

● Key goalscorer Carlos Ruiz is still there, and if he can carry the team for a third straight year, Galaxy are in with a chance.

METROSTARS

Yet to put together a convincing season, and last year's team leader Clint Mathis has now departed after failing to deliver. Midfield rock Richie Williams has also gone, while injury-prone forward Jaime Moreno has been released. Coach Bob Bradley must now rely on two teenagers, Eddie Gaven and Mike Magee, for goals, while Joselito Vaca, acquired from Dallas, could pep up the midfield if he clicks with Amado Guevara. In defence, much depends on Eddie Pope after Steve Jolley's departure.

● A shaky defence and lack of an experienced scorer suggest it will be another barren year.

NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION

Few changes from last term, when after finishing second in the Eastern Conference they were well beaten in the play-off quarter-finals by Fire. Last year's bright spots – forward Pat Noonan, midfielder Shalrie Joseph and Uruguayan playmaker Jose Cancela – are all still there, along with top scorer Taylor Twellman.

● Definite contenders, especially if Cancela can keep the supply going to the dangerous forwards.

SAN JOSE EARTHQUAKES

The defending champions will look much like last year, although new coach Dominic Kinnear was lucky to hang on to international forward Landon Donovan after a projected move to England fell through. Two veterans – defender Jeff Agoos and Danish midfielder Ronnie

Still around...Landon Donovan

Ekelund – both agreed to take a salary cut to stay on. Forward Brian Ching can expect plenty of playing time after missing much of last term through injury.

● Still the best all-round team and another championship triumph is definitely on.

Songnam in charge

ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Heading for a draw...Al Hilal (blue) v Al Sharjah

THE ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE has been revamped for its second edition, with the introduction of a first-round group stage played on a home-and-away basis. This has caused scheduling problems for the clubs from the powerful Japan, South Korea and China, who have been holding their own A3 Champions Cup tournament at the same time. However, that did not stop Korea's Songnam Ilhwa winning both the Far-east event and their first two Champions League games – 2-1 away to Persik of Indonesia and 2-0 at home to Vietnam's Binh Dinh – to top Group G. They share the lead with Japan's Yokohama F Marinos, runners-up in the A3 tournament.

Thai side BEC Tero Sasana, Champions League runners-up last season, had an indifferent start in Group E, defeating Shanghai Shenhua 4-1 in Bangkok before losing 3-0 at Jubilo Iwata. Brazilian striker Rodrigo Gral scored twice to give the Japanese side their second win in a row, having defeated Chonbuk Motors of Korea 2-1 away in the opening game.

Dalian Shide look set to cruise through Group F after wins over Hoang Anh Gia Lai of Vietnam and Thais Krung Thai Bank.

In the western section, Group C has only three participants following the withdrawal of Bahrain's Al Ahli. Former Asian champions Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia were held 0-0 at home by Al Sharjah of the UAE in their first game. Al Ittihad, Al Hilal's compatriots, top Group D after wins over Al Arabi of Kuwait and Uzbeks Neftchi; Al Wahda of the UAE share top spot in Group B with Qatar's Al Sadd; and Zob Ahan of Iran lead the way in Group A, one point clear of Qatar SC and Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor.

The seven group winners plus holders Al Ain of the UAE, who received a bye, qualify for the knockout quarter-finals.

Michael Church

Nationality for hire?

QATAR

Qatar's attempts to become a major regional player reached a new level with the news that its FA is considering paying foreign players to switch nationality. Already, Brazil-born striker Ailton of Werder Bremen has claimed he was offered £550,000 to do so.

Qatar coach Philippe Troussier said: "It's probably the only means to qualify Qatar for a World Cup. Naturalisations are nothing new in Qatar; 80 per cent of my squad were not born in the country."

Qatar came closest to qualifying for the World Cup in 1997, for the France finals, when a win in their last game against Saudi Arabia would have put them through. However, they lost 1-0.

The cash-for-nationality issue follows on from the Qataris spending vast sums to lure veteran stars such as Frank Leboeuf to play in the domestic League.

Michael Church

ROUND-UP

ASIA

● CHINESE champions Shanghai Shenhua have appointed former Leeds boss Howard Wilkinson as coach. Wilkinson, recently the English FA's technical director, has been given a three-year contract. International midfielder Li Tie will be sidelined for several months after fracturing a leg in training.

● Turkish international striker Ilhan Mansiz was the biggest pre-season import into JAPAN, when joining Vissel Kobe from Besiktas in a two-year deal reportedly worth £1.1million per annum.

● Esteghlal and IRAN player Ali Reza Vahedinikbakht has joined United Arab Emirates side Al Wasl.

● Valencia retained the MALDIVES League title, finishing four points clear of Victory FC.

● UNITED ARAB EMIRATES side Al Nasr fired French coach Rene Exbrayat following a defeat by newly-promoted Al Khaleej.

● Iraqi coach Adnan Hamd turned his back on the LEBANESE national team job just two hours after taking his first training session. He claimed the federation had not given him a contract and that the coaches of club sides Olympic Beirut and Al Nejmeh had refused to release players.

Michael Church, Azam Mahmood & Mike Plastow

● *See World Service, page 75, for a World Cup qualifying round-up.*

Big import...Ilhan at Vissel

OCEANIA

● A 2-0 home win over Sydney United secured Perth Glory their third AUSTRALIAN Minor Premiership title in four years. Glory now head into the six-team championship play-offs along with Parramatta Power, Adelaide United, Marconi Stallions, South Melbourne and Brisbane Strikers.

The national side drew 1-1 away to Venezuela in a February friendly. Paul Agostinho put the Socceroos ahead early on, but Juan Arango equalised in stoppage time.

Australia's Under-23s beat their New Zealand counterparts 3-1 on aggregate to qualify for the Athens Olympics.

● Harry Kewell has equalled Wynton Rufer's record of three OCEANIA FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR accolades. The Liverpool and Australia midfielder collected the 2003 award after polling more votes than his three nearest rivals combined. Compatriot Mark Viduka and New Zealander Ryan Nelsen finished second and third respectively.

● Ba won FIJI'S Champions v Champions series for the 11th year running after beating Rewa 4-2 on aggregate.

Paul Moon

TALENT SCOUT

TOMORROW'S STARS **TODAY**

Patrice EVRA

Breaking the shackles...Evra holds off PSV's Kasper Bogelund during a Champions League match

Monaco full-back considered the heir apparent to Lizarazu

DESPITE HIS INITIAL misgivings, redeployment has proved key to the success of Monaco left-back Patrice Evra.

When ex-Nice boss Sandro Salvioni informed Evra three years ago that he wanted to move him from the left side of attack to full-back, the youngster's first reaction was to dig in his heels, arguing that he was a creator, not a destroyer.

How wrong he was. His tenacity, speed and good use of the ball made him ideally suited to his new brief. As well as being voted the best left-back in the French Second Division in 2001-02, word of his talent began to spread around Europe, with Barcelona, Juventus and Auxerre among the growing band of admirers.

Evra eventually plumped for Cote d'Azur neighbours Monaco, however, and although he faced stiff competition from Belgian Philippe Leonard, Gael Givet and Franck Jurietti, he quickly established himself as first-choice. Evra is now a key part of a young, vibrant Monegasque side who have shown strong recent form at home and in the Champions League.

"At first I was tempted to join Auxerre but what impressed me about Monaco was the attitude of coach Didier Deschamps," says Evra. "He told me he would always give a chance to promising youngsters who showed commitment. He doesn't care who you are, if you live up to his expectations, he sticks by you.

"He's made me more disciplined. For the first few games I was camped in the opposition half and he had to tell me some home truths. He said that if I wanted to stay in the team, I must make defending my priority."

Evra, still only 22, has already amassed a great deal of experience, including a two-year spell abroad. After playing for Parisian amateur sides Ulis – from where Thierry Henry set out on the road to superstardom – and Bretigny, he joined the Paris Saint-Germain youth team. He was then spotted in 1998 by Italian Serie C club Marsala and jumped at the chance of winning his first professional contract with the Sicilians.

"I was tired of waiting for opportunities in France," says Evra. "I knew it could all go wrong for me in Italy but was prepared to take the risk."

He need not have worried. His form on the left flank for Marsala was excellent and after a stint with Serie B Monza, he was lured back across the Alps by Nice early in 2001.

Thanks to his outstanding work for Monaco and the French Under-21s, he is widely considered the heir apparent to Bixente Lizarazu in the senior France side. But a future with *Les Bleus* was not the only international avenue open to him. Senegal-born Evra was asked whether he would like to play for the African nation in the 2002 World Cup but turned them down.

"While I'm proud of my Senegalese roots, my dream was always to play for France," he says. "Euro 2004 would be a bonus for me but I hope to be a full international in two or three years. I have the potential. Step by step I'm getting closer to the France team."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Monaco
Country France
Born May 15, 1981, in Dakar, Senegal
Previous clubs Ulis, Bretigny-sur-Orge, Paris Saint-Germain, Marsala (Ita), Monza (Ita), Nice
Honours French League Cup 2003 (Monaco)

Leopoldo JIMENEZ

Midfielder having the last laugh for 'bad joke' Venezuela

LEGENDARY FORMER BRAZIL coach and journalist Joao Saldanha once described Venezuelan football as "a bad joke". There was a powerful consensus that football could never catch on in a land in which baseball is king.

Leopoldo Jimenez knew otherwise. He was born into the game. Both his parents played, his father with some renown as the goalkeeper of Deportivo Galicia. "He used to take me to training sessions," says Jimenez junior. "I grew up with the life, and always knew that I wanted to be a professional footballer. I've no idea what I'd be doing if it hadn't worked out."

Jimenez has grown along with the national team, who, ignored for so long, now play their home games in front of a full house. His international career includes two embarrassing defeats by Brazil. But he has become an indispensable member of a side who have genuine hopes of making it to their first World Cup.

"I think we can do it," he says. "There's a long, tough road ahead, but we're doing well, still growing and developing."

The same applies to Jimenez. He first broke into the side at right-back, and then spent time as a utility man on the subs' bench. It is only in the past year that he has established himself in his favourite central midfield role.

It is a zone where Venezuela usually field two players, who in recent times have been captain Luis Vera and young hope Miguel Mea Vitali. But the former has had injury problems, the latter has lost form, and Jimenez appears now to be above both in the pecking order.

He is certainly the most dynamic of the three. Like a true all-rounder he marks, tackles, passes and gets forward in support of the attack. It is just a matter of time before he scores his first international goal – he twice came close in the World Cup tie against Argentina last September.

Jimenez was generally acclaimed as the outstanding player in Venezuelan football last year. But he would readily admit that the domestic game has its deficiencies.

"After playing in a packed stadium for the national team it's disappointing to see so many empty spaces the following Sunday," he says. "It does affect your motivation."

On a weekly basis it is still proving hard to tear Venezuela's football enthusiasts away from the Spanish and Italian leagues. It is no wonder that Jimenez dreams of escape. "I would love to play for Boca Juniors or one of the big European clubs," he says. But while he waits for the call, help is at hand.

Jimenez's recent move to Maracaibo from Caracas side Ital-Chacao has given him the opportunity to play in the Libertadores Cup and show the rest of Latin America what he can do.

Maracaibo were only prevented from winning their Libertadores opener against Argentina's Velez Sarsfield by an injury-time own goal. For both club and country Leopoldo Jimenez is showing that the joke is on those who are still not taking Venezuelan football seriously.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club **Maracaibo**
Country **Venezuela**
Born **May 22, 1978**
Previous club **Deportivo Ital-Chacao**
International debut **March 1999, v Colombia**
International caps **46 (0 goals)**
Honours **Venezuelan League 1999**

Marouane CHAMAKH

Rapid rise for Morocco's France-raised Nations Cup hero

LIKE AN EVER-GROWING list before him, young Marouane Chamakh was faced with a difficult choice at an early age – between playing for France, the land of his birth, or for the land of his father. In his case, the distant promise of wearing the shirt of *Les Bleus* lost out to the instant attraction of Morocco.

Now, after playing in a team that finished surprise runners-up at the African Nations Cup finals, Chamakh can justifiably claim: *"Je ne regrette rien."* Understandably so, after playing a prominent part with two goals in the tournament in Tunisia.

It has been a fast track for the 20-year-old from Bordeaux, who a year ago was still trying to break out of the reserve side in France's lower leagues. In January 2003, he got his first call from Bordeaux coach Elie Baup – suspension, injuries and departures during the transfer window had opened up a chance for the young Moroccan in the League Cup against Metz. His League debut came against Bastia three weeks later and by the end of the season he had notched his first goal in Ligue 1.

Chamakh is a product of the club's youth system, having signed at the age of 16. His rapid progress has been the source of much pride to coaches Patrick Battiston and Marius Tresor, both former French internationals. But, to date, Morocco have benefited most from his precocious talent. After winning his first cap in a Nations Cup qualifier against Sierra Leone in Freetown last June, Chamakh boosted his ever-growing reputation with two goals in a friendly against Trinidad & Tobago in September to earn a place in the squad for the Tunisia finals.

He scored against Benin in the first round but saved his best for the dramatic finale to the quarter-final. Morocco were losing to Algeria deep into stoppage time only for Chamakh's predatory instincts to hand them a lifeline with an equaliser...and subsequent progress all the way to the Final.

Mark Gleeson

FACT FILE

- **Club** Bordeaux (Fra)
- **Country** Morocco
- **Born** January 10, 1984, in Aiguillon, France
- **International debut** June 2003, v Sierra Leone
- **International caps** 10 (4 goals)

Stein HUYSEGEMS

Promising Belgian who's made a break for the border

TOO MUCH, too soon is not the credo of talented Belgian attacker Stein Huysegems. Rather than succumbing to reported overtures from the likes of Roma, Barcelona, PSV Eindhoven and Kyiv Dynamo, he opted early this season to leave Lierse for Holland's AZ Alkmaar.

Many Belgians seized on Huysegems' choice of destination as proof that he lacked ambition, given that AZ had been anchored in mid-table for the past half-dozen years. In fact, the 21-year-old was showing sound judgment. He wanted regular first-team football and had no intention of emulating another highly-promising young Belgian, playmaker Jonathan Blondel, who barely featured in 18 months at Tottenham and recently returned home to play for Club Brugge.

"It was not easy to leave Lierse but I was ready for the next stage in my development," says Huysegems, who was called up to the senior Belgium squad for the first time last September. "Alkmaar may not be a top club but they are the right one for me. They are very ambitious. They want to qualify for Europe and become one of the top three sides in Holland."

Cue sniggers from Ajax, Feyenoord and PSV fans. But Huysegems and his new team-mates have had the last laugh, lying third at the end of February and a good bet to qualify for the UEFA Cup, with Feyenoord three points behind them. "I'm sure I'm going to benefit from playing in Holland," says Huysegems. "The game is a lot faster, the ball zips around more and because referees are more tolerant, challenges are fiercer. I'm confident of improving in all areas."

Huysegems is quick and knows how to finish – last season he hit 16 League goals for Lierse. However, his instinctive game can be hit and miss at times, a failing AZ's demanding coach, ex-Ajax boss Co Adriaanse, will surely be looking to eradicate as soon as possible. "Technically and physically, Huysegems could play for Ajax," says Adriaanse. "But he must get used to performing under pressure."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

- **Club** AZ Alkmaar (Hol)
- **Country** Belgium
- **Born** June 16, 1982, in Herselt
- **Previous club** Lierse

Ricardo FULLER

Jamaican 'elastic man' lighting up the English First Division

CRAIG BROWN'S first move as manager of English First Division side Preston North End was to sign a gangly young Jamaican striker with a record of eight appearances and no goals in English football.

Ricardo Fuller had struggled with injury in an unhappy three-month spell at Crystal Palace but, fully recovered, he made such an impression on Brown while on loan at Edinburgh club Hearts that the former Scotland manager snapped up the unpredictable youngster for just £400,000 in summer 2002.

Fuller duly scored on his Preston debut – ironically against Palace – by lifting the ball over a defender's head and running past him to sweep it into the net. His speed, strength in the air and enthusiasm marked him out as a huge talent. But it was his mazy dribbles, often going between two or three defenders in a confined space, that shocked Preston fans, not used to such audacity.

But after Fuller scored 11 goals in his first 20 games, he suffered a season-ending knee injury and Preston promptly lost eight of their next nine games. The Jamaican returned to action this term and was soon back among the goals, scoring 17 by mid-January. He also caused Brazil problems during their friendly with the Reggae Boyz last October. Rumours of a move to the Premiership were rife but Preston were adamant they would keep 'the elastic man' – under contract until July 2005 – at least until the summer unless a 'ludicrous' bid was made.

However, Fuller's performances deteriorated as the transfer window closed. Struggling with niggles to his other knee, he also seemed to be sulking. "Things need sorting out," he claimed. "You need to be happy wherever you are – if you're happy you can score 30 goals."

Another dozen goals and a place in the Premiership – either via the play-offs with Preston or a big-money move in the summer – should put a smile back on his face.

Gavin Willacy

FACT FILE

Club Preston North End (Eng)
Country Jamaica
Born October 31, 1979, in Kingston
Previous clubs Tivoli Gardens, Crystal Palace (Eng), Hearts (Sco)
International debut February 1999, v Costa Rica

Lukas PODOLSKI

Koln teenager taking the Bundesliga by storm

TAKE NOTE OF the name Lukas Podolski, the teenage Koln attacker who scooped the Bundesliga Player of the Month award for December just weeks after making his professional bow.

Rarely in recent times has a young German player made such an instant impact. Operating in a deep-lying role behind a lone striker, Podolski, 18, has almost single-handedly revived Koln hopes of escaping from the relegation quicksand. He poses a constant threat with his pace, twisting runs and stinging shot, and has already been on the scoresheet, against Hansa Rostock and Hertha Berlin.

The Germany Under-19 striker is not overawed by the big occasion. Even when facing the millionaires of Bayern Munich at the Olympiastadion, he was fearless and positive throughout, playing a key role as Koln surprisingly held their supposed betters to a 2-2 draw.

"I was just enjoying playing at a stadium that is normally a stage for the big clubs of Europe," said Podolski, who was born in Poland but moved with his parents to the Rhineland when still in nappies. "It's the same against Bayern or playing for Koln juniors. I always give everything. Right now I don't feel any pressure. Perhaps it will come later."

Many bosses would have shied away from pitching a teenager into a relegation battle. However, Koln's new coach, Swiss Marc Koller, was sure Podolski was made of the right stuff.

"Lukas is a lad with a lot of talent," says Koller, the former Grasshopper coach. "He's unbelievably quick, which is very important, has good technique, vision and goalscoring instincts. He has taken events in his stride, but we must take care too much is not expected of him too soon."

Chief executive Andreas Rettig agrees, adding: "While Lukas's attitude has been first-class and he has injected a lot of quality into the team, it's not good for him to be portrayed as the saviour of Koln."

Given the media hype currently surrounding Podolski, that may be a forlorn hope.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Koln
Country Germany
Born June 4, 1985, in Gliwice, Poland

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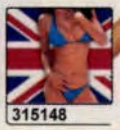
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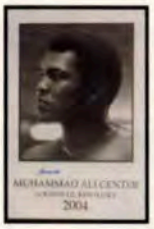

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Big guns scrape wins

Japan, South Korea and China get off to an unconvincing start in the 2006 World Cup qualifiers

WORLD CUP 2002 co-hosts Japan and South Korea kicked off their respective qualifying campaigns for Germany 2006 in less-than-impressive fashion, posting narrow victories over Oman and Lebanon respectively.

Zico-coached Japan laboured before securing a last-gasp 1-0 win over a young Omani side who deserved a draw. Yokohama F Marinos striker Tatsuhiko Kubo scored from close range with three minutes of injury time elapsed after the ball was fortuitously deflected into his path.

Oman's Norway-based goalkeeper Ali Al-Habsi had kept Japan goalless until then, saving a 20th-minute penalty from Shunsuke Nakamura, awarded following a foul on Naohiro Takahara.

"The most important thing is that we achieved our goal," said Zico, whose team were booed off at half-time in the Saitama game. "It could have been a draw. I am very thankful that we could win 1-0."

But the victory failed to ease the pressure on the Brazilian, who has been under fire since last year's Confederations Cup after a series of lacklustre performances.

Japan share the lead in Group 3 with India, who beat Singapore 1-0 in Goa in their opening game.

Humberto Coelho's South Korea sneaked a 2-0 victory over Lebanon in Group 7, thanks to headers from Cha Doo-ri and Cho Byung-kuk. Vietnam top them on goal difference after a 4-0 win over the Maldives in Hanoi.

Iran ran out comfortable 3-1 winners over Qatar in Group 1 despite being forced to play the match behind closed doors at the Azadi stadium in Tehran. The lockout was ordered after crowd trouble marred Iran's home Asian Cup qualifier against North Korea last year.

Ali Vahedinikbakht, Mehdi Mahdavikia and Ali Daei scored for Branco Ivancovic's side in an impressive win over Philippe Troussier's team.

Jordan lead the group after a 5-0 home win over Laos.

Saudi Arabia and China – Asia's other two qualifiers for Korea/Japan 2002 – also picked up full points. The Saudis strolled to a 3-0 win over Indonesia in Riyadh in Group 8, but China made heavy work of a poor Kuwait side, winning thanks to a solitary header from veteran striker Hao Haidong.

Turkmenistan lie second behind Saudi after defeating Sri Lanka 2-0; Hong Kong lead China on goal difference after defeating Malaysia 3-1 away.

In the other major fixture of the opening round Iraq held Uzbekistan to a 1-1 draw in Tashkent in Group 2. Kyiv Dynamo's Maxim Shatskikh set up Anvarjob Soliev for the late equaliser after Ahmed Alwan had given the Iraqis the lead in the 58th minute. The sending-off of Haedr Khadim with 18 minutes to go crippled the Iraqis hopes, and Soliev scored seven minutes later.

"We are very happy with such a result," said Iraq's German coach Bernd Stange. "A draw for us is a good start in a tournament that is like a marathon."

Both teams trail Palestine, who recorded the biggest win of the first round with an 8-0 trouncing of Taiwan to give new coach Alfred Riedl the perfect start to his tenure.

Michael Church

Saitama showdown...Japan's Shunsuke Nakamura challenges Hassan Al-Ghailani of Oman

● Haiti set up a tie with Jamaica after defeating the Turks & Caicos Islands 7-0 on aggregate in a CONCACAF first stage World Cup qualifying tie. A hat-trick from Johnny Descollines put the Haitians on their way to a 5-0 first leg victory. Both ties were played in the USA.

Haiti, who will face the Reggae Boyz in June for a place in the second stage groups, were the only side to have secured their progress at press time. However, Bermuda's 13-0 first leg demolition of Montserrat virtually assured them of safe passage.

INTERNATIONALS

Sunday, February 1

Feb 1 - friendly
Guadeloupe 2
St Lucia 0

Saturday, February 7

Feb 7 - Shenzhen - friendly
China 2 (Zhang Yuning 8, Zheng Zhi 41)
Finland 1 (Kopteff 37)
HT: 2-1

Feb 7 - Ibaraki - Kirin Challenge Cup
Japan 4 (Ogasawara 10, Miyamoto 37, N Yamada 45, Endo 46)
Malaysia 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 29,530. **Ref:** M Moradi (Irn)
Japan: Doi (Tsusuki 75) - N Yamada (Kaji 63), Miyamoto (Moniwa 63), Alex (Miura 63), Tsuboi (Nakazawa 63), Fujita (Ishikawa 75), T Yamada (Oku 75), Ogasawara, Endo, Kubo (Kurobe 75), Motoyama.

Sunday, February 8

Feb 8 - Beirut - friendly
Lebanon 2 (Shahoud 90, Al-Jamal 90)
Bahrain 1 (Yousuf 5)
HT: 0-1
Sent off: Hubail (Bahrain) 78min

Feb 8 - friendly
St Lucia 1
St Vincent & The Grenadines 2
HT: 0-2

Tuesday, February 10

Feb 10 - Hamilton - friendly
Bermuda 0
Trinidad & Tobago 1 (Glenn 64)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Raynor (Ber)

Thursday, February 12

Feb 12 - Hamilton - friendly
Bermuda 2 (C Smith 36, Simons 76)
Trinidad & Tobago 2 (C Smith 37, Glenn 75)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Crockwell (Ber)

Feb 12 - Tokyo - friendly
Japan 2 (Yanagisawa 47, Alex 84)
Iraq 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 38,622. **Ref:** Kwon (SKo)
Japan: Narazaki - N Yamada, Miyamoto, Alex, Tsuboi, Fujita (Nakamura 72), T Yamada (Fukunishi 14), Ogasawara, Endo, Kubo, Yanagisawa (Okubo 79).

Feb 12 - Amman - friendly
Jordan 2 (Sheikh 39, Saleem 45)
Indonesia 1 (Bambang 15)
HT: 2-1

Friday, February 13

Feb 13 - friendly
Qatar 2
Bahrain 0
HT: 1-0

Saturday, February 14

Feb 14 - Ulsan - friendly
South Korea 5 (M Al-Noobi og 9, Seol Ki-hyeon 25, Ahn Jung-hwan pen 41, 60, Rabee'a og 86)
Oman 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 26,514. **Ref:** Yoshida (Jap)
South Korea: Kim Yong-dae (Kim Young-kwang 84) - Choi Jin-cheul (Park Jae-hong 77), Cho Byung-kuk (Park Yo-seb 69), Kim Tae-young, Choi Won-kwon (Song Chong-gug 81), Kim Dong-jin, Kim Nam-il, Park Ji-sung (Kim Do-heon 66), Cha Doo-ri (Choi Sung-kuk 56), Ahn Jung-hwan (Chung Kyung-ho 61), Seol Ki-hyeon.

Sunday, February 15

Feb 15 - friendly
Barbados 0
Guyana 2
HT: 0-0

Wednesday, February 18

Feb 18 - Tirana - friendly
Albania 2 (Skela 69, Aliaj 75)
Sweden 1 (Selakovic 50)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Paparesta (Ita)
Albania: Strakosha - E Beqiri, Cipi, Cana, Aliaj, K Duro (A Beqiri 81), Skela, Hasi, Murati, Bushi (Myrtaj 46), Rraklli (Tare 46).
Sweden: Isaksson - Lucic, Jakobsson, Hansson, Edman, Linderoth, M Nilsson (Skoog 87), Kallstrom, P Farnerud, Elmander (Prica 63), Selakovic.

Feb 18 - Brussels - friendly
Belgium 0
France 2 (Govou 46, Saha 76)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 43,160. **Ref:** Halsey (Eng)
Belgium: De Vlieger (Herpoel 46) - Van Damme, Kompany, Simons, Deflandre (De Cock 85), Baseggio (Bisconti 85), Clement, P Van der Heyden (Soetaers 54), M Mpenza (E Mpenza 69), Buffel (Chatelle 85), Sonck (Pieroni 88).
France: Barthez - Gallas (Boumsong 86), Thuram, Desailly, Silvestre (Lizarazu 46), Dacourt (Makelele 18), Vieira (Rothen 62), Govou (Pires 46), Zidane (Kapo 70), Luyindula (Marlet 62), Saha (Mexes 85).

Feb 18 - Split - friendly
Croatia 1 (Neretljak 86)
Germany 2 (Klose 34, Ramelow 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Frojdfeldt (Swe)
Croatia: Pletikosa - Zivkovic, Tomas, R Kovac (D Simic 46), Simunic, Srna (Bule 62), N Kovac, Rosso (J Leko 46), Babic (Neretljak 74), Prso (Olic 58), Klasnic.
Germany: Kahn - Friedrich, Worns, Nowotny, Lahm, Baumann, Hamann, Freier (Schneider 77), Frings (Ramelow 62), Klose (Lauth 80), Kuranyi (Bobic 67).

Feb 18 - Athens - friendly
Greece 2 (Papadopoulos 25, Vryzas 60)
Bulgaria 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Greece: Nikopolidis - Fissas (Goumas 76), Seitaridis, Kapsis (Dabizas 46), Dellas, Basinas (Katsouranis 80), Zagorakis, Tsiartas (Kafes 65), Lakis (Georgiadis 46), Haristeas (Vryzas 46), Papadopoulos (I Amanatidis 46).
Bulgaria: Zdravkov (Ivankov 55) - Kirilov (Krastev 76), I Petkov, Borimirov (M Petkov 55), Berbatov (Kaburov 77), Lazarov (Topuzakov 55), Peev (Dimitrov 67), Hristov (Jankovic 67), M Petrov, Stilian Petrov (Yanchev 76), Pazin.

Feb 18 - Amsterdam - friendly
Holland 1 (Robben 56)
United States 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 29,700. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)
Holland: Van der Sar - Heitinga, Stam, Cocu (Zenden 71), Bouma (F De Boer 79), Davids (Seedorf 46), Sneijder (Van Bommel 46), Van der Meyde (Makaay 46), Van der Vaart, Van Nistelrooy (Van Hooijdonk 79), Robben.
United States: Keller - Hejduk (Cherundolo 84), Berhalter, Bocanegra, Gibbs, Convey, Armas, Reyna (Wolff 71), Lewis (Beasley 46), McBride (Mathis 60), Donovan.

Feb 18 - Tegucigalpa - friendly
Honduras 1 (De Leon 24)
Colombia 1 (Herrera 58)
HT: 1-0

Feb 18 - Tel Aviv - friendly
Israel 6 (Arbeitman 9, 65, 69, Tal pen 24, Katan 45, 61)
Azerbaijan 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 13,250. **Ref:** Gomes F Paraty (Por)

Feb 18 - Palermo - friendly
Italy 2 (Vieri 14, Di Natale 86)
Czech Republic 2 (Stajner 42, Rosicky 89)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 20,935. **Ref:** Braamhaar (Hol)
Italy: Buffon (Toldo 46) - Panucci (Oddo 46), Nesta (Adani 46), Legrottaglie (Ferrari 46), Bettarini (Pancaro 79), Perrotta (Volpi 82), Pirlo (Barone 46), Fiore (Nervo 64), Totti (Delvecchio 46), Del Piero (Di Natale 64), Vieri (Corradi 46).
Czech Republic: Blazek (Kinsky 46) - Grygera (Jiranek 46), Bolf (Vorisek 88), Rozehnal (Drobny 46), Jankulovski, Galasek (Hubschman 56), Poborsky (Tyce 46), Rosicky, Nedved (Jarosik 79), Stajner (Heinz 46), Koller (Lokvenc 46).

Feb 18 - Kingston - friendly
Jamaica 2 (Lowe 9, J Johnson 82)
Uruguay 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** Gordon (T&T)

Feb 18 - Tripoli - friendly
Libya 1 (Kara 55)
Ukraine 1 (Pukanych 14)
HT: 0-1
Ukraine: Shovkovskyi - Symonenko (Checher 62), Shershun, Holovko, Hai, Tymoshchuk, Pukanych (Lutsenko 50), Shyschenko (Tkachenko 66), Kosyrin (Onyschenko 74), Voronin (Kabanov 59), Rebrov (Balabanov 62).

Feb 18 - Skopje - friendly
Macedonia 1 (Pandev 20)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Vrajkov (Bul)

Feb 18 - Carson, USA - friendly
Mexico 1 (Bravo 49)
Chile 1 (Navia 45)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 26,000. **Ref:** Cruz (USA)
Mexico: O Sanchez - Briseno, F Rodriguez, Osorio, Valdez (Arce 74), D Martinez, R Garcia (M Perez 61), L Perez, Lopez, Bautista (Mora 59), Bravo.
Chile: N Tapia - J Vargas, R Rojas (Villaroel 73), Olarra, R Perez, Figueroa, Melendez, Cordova (Mark Gonzalez 46), Martel (Pinilla 46), Navia, Beausejour (Valdivia 46).

Feb 18 - Rabat - friendly
Morocco 2 (Ajeddou 79, Aiajour 82)
Switzerland 1 (Frei 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Berber Kamal (Alg)
Switzerland: Stiel - Haas, Henchoz (Zwyssig 86), P Muller, Spycher (Berner 46), Huggel (Cabanas 46), Vogel (Celestini 46), Wicky, H Yakin (Rama 78), Frei, Chapuisat (Streller 64).

Feb 18 - Belfast - friendly
Northern Ireland 1 (Healy 56)
Norway 4 (Pedersen 17, 35, Iversen 43, Gillespie og 57)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 11,288. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
N Ireland: Taylor - Baird, McCartney, A Hughes, Kennedy (Jones 77), Griffin (Williams 46), Gillespie (McVeigh 73), Johnson, M Hughes, Healy, Smith.
Norway: Myhre (Holtan 70) - El-Fakiri, R Johnsen, Hangeland, Riise (Hanstveit 70), Helstad (Hoiland 89), Andresen, Hoseth, Pedersen (Odegaard 81), Iversen (Tessem 63), Rushfeldt (H Flo 46).

Feb 18 - San Fernando, Spain - friendly
Poland 2 (Mila 24, Niedzielan 65)
Slovenia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 100. **Ref:** Barea Lopez (Spa)
Poland: Dudek - Rzasa (Baszczynski 54), Klos, J Bak (Hajto 46), Michal Zewlakow, Kosowski (Mila 16), Gorawski (Zienczuk 68), M Lewandowski (Burkhardt 89), Kukielka, Rasiak, Zurawski (Niedzielan 46).
Slovenia: Simeunovic (Mavric 46) - Vugdalic, Knavs (Cipot 64), Cesar, Karic (Koren 67), Sukalo (Rakovic 80), Pavlin, Acimovic (Kapic 46), Zahovic (Kokot 67), N Ceh (Filekovic 86), Siljak.

Feb 18 - Faro - friendly
Portugal 1 (Pauleta 68)
England 1 (King 47)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Portugal: Ricardo - Paulo Ferreira (Miguel 46), Fernando Couto (Beto 84), Jorge Andrade (Ricardo Carvalho 73), Rui Jorge (Nuno Valente 46), Costinha (Deco 46), Petit (Hugo Viana 82), Figo (Boa Morte 65), Rui Costa (Tiago 60), Simao (Cristiano Ronaldo 46), Pauleta (Hugo Almeida 77).
England: James - P Neville (Mills 46), Southgate, King, Ashley Cole (Bridge 18; Hargreaves 85), Beckham (Jenas 86), Butt (Carragher 86), Scholes (Dyer 46), Lampard (J Cole 46), Owen (Heskey 69), Rooney (Smith 69).

Feb 18 - Dublin - friendly
Rep Ireland 0
Brazil 0
Att: 44,000. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Rep Ireland: Given - Carr, O'Brien, Cunningham, O'Shea, Holland, Kavanagh, Kilbane, A Reid (McAteer 64), Robbie Keane, Morrison.
Brazil: Dida - Cafu, Lucio, Roque Junior, Roberto Carlos, Gilberto Silva (Edmilson 13), Kleberson (Julio Baptista 46), Ze Roberto, Ronaldinho, Kaka, Ronaldo.

Feb 18 - Barcelona - friendly
Spain 2 (Etxeberria 30, Baraja 32)
Peru 1 (Solano 20)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 23,580. **Ref:** Layec (Fra)
Spain: Casillas (Canizares 46) - Michel Salgado (Raul Bravo 46), Marchena, Ivan Helguera, Puyol, Xabi Alonso (Albelda 46), Baraja (Xavi 46), Etxeberria (Joaquin 46), Vicente (Luque 46), Valeron, Raul (Tamudo 46).
Peru: Ibanez - Jorge Soto (Salas 46), Rebosio, Galliquio (Acasiete 69), Hidalgo, C Zegarra (La Rosa 64), Ciurlizza, Solano (Garcia 81), Mendoza (Farfan 66), Palacios (Quinteros 74), Pizarro (Silva 66).

Feb 18 - Adana - friendly
Turkey 0
Denmark 1 (Martin Jorgensen 32)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Wack (Ger)
Turkey: Rustu - Fatih Sonkaya (Serkan 73), Ibrahim Toraman, Umit Ozat (Ugur 46), Deniz (Tolga 46), Ibrahim Uzulmez (Faruk 68), Orhan (Zafer 46), Altintop (Cagdas 73), Gokdeniz (Selcuk 46), Nihat, Tuncay.
Denmark: Sorensen - Helveg (Priske 73), Henriksen (Kroldrup 46), Laursen, N Jensen, Gravesen, C Jensen, Gronkjaer (Perez 63), D Jensen (Michaelsen 80), Martin Jorgensen (Madsen 58), Tomasson (Sand 46).

Feb 18 - Caracas - friendly
Venezuela 1 (Arango 90)
Australia 1 (Agostino 18)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Venezuela: Angelucci (Dudamel 46) - Vallenilla (H Gonzalez 59), Rey, Cichero, Hernandez, Jimenez, L Vera (A Gonzalez 46), Urdaneta (Rojas 46), Arango, Moran (Moreno 46), Margiotta. *Sent off: Rey 72min.*
Australia: Schwarzer - Muscat, Moore, Popovic, Neill, Sterjovski, Bresciano, Colosimo, Lazaridis (Hahmad 28), Zdrilic (Grella 82), Agostino (T Vidmar 61).

Feb 18 - Cardiff - friendly
Wales 4 (Earnshaw 1, 35, 58, Taylor 78)
Scotland 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 47,124. **Ref:** Ross (NI)
Wales: Crossley (Ward 46) - Edwards, Melville (Symons 87), Page, Gabbidon, Oster, Savage (Fletcher 72), Speed (C Robinson 72), Davies (Parry 33), Earnshaw, Giggs (Taylor 46).
Scotland: Douglas - McNamara, Ritchie, S Caldwell, Naysmith (Murty 46), Dailly, Fletcher (Webster 86), Cameron (Gallagher 68), Pearson (McFadden 46), Dickov, K Miller.

Saturday, February 21

Feb 21 - San Fernando, Spain - friendly
Poland 6 (Kryszalowicz 9, 39, 41, 42, Klos 60, Kukielka 86)
Faroe Islands 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 100. **Ref:** Cascales (Spa)
Poland: Nalepa (Kowalewski 46) - Wasilewski, Klos, Bieniuk (Kowalczyk 46), Baszczynski, Gorawski (Nowacki 46), Kukielka, Burkhardt, Zienczuk, Zurawski, Kryszalowicz (Jelen 46).

Tuesday, February 24

Feb 24 - San Fernando, Spain - friendly
Luxembourg 2
Faroe Islands 4 (John Petersen 2, Olsen, J Johnsson)
HT: 1-0

2006 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

ASIA

1st stage

Group 1

Feb 18 - Tehran
Iran 3 (Vahedinikbakht 8, Mahdavikia 44, Daei pen 62)
Qatar 1 (Rasoul pen 70)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Haj Khader (Syr)
Iran: Mirzapour - Rezaei, Navidkia, Nosrati, Kaabi, Mahdavikia, Badaavi, Nekoonam (Abbasi 51), Vahedinikbakht (Rajabzadeh 75), Karimi (Taghipour 89), Daei.
Qatar: M Ahmed - A Al-Meamari, Saud Al-Shammari, Saad Al-Shammari, Rasoul (Siddiq 86), W Ahmed (Bechir 46), Mahmoud, S Al-Meamari, Fazli, Koni, M Al-Baloushi (Al-Marri 83).

Feb 18 - Amman
Jordan 5 (Akel 39, Shelbaya 45, Al-Shaqran 63, Ragheb 90, Shehdeh 90)
Laos 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Al-Mozahmi (Oma)
Jordan: Mahad - Bani Yaseen, Ibrahim, Shelbaya, Mansour, Qasem, Abu Alieh, Akel, Al-Awadat (Shehdeh 71), Al-Zboun (Al-Shboul 46), Al-Shaqran (Ragheb 70).

Laos: S Khanyyavong - Viengazoun, Vilayphong, Tapsouvanh, Chanthalome, Chalana, Phayvanh, Dalaphone, Phapouvanin, Namthavisay (Phachoumphon 57), Phothilath (Thongphachan 70).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jordan	1	1	0	0	5	0	3
Iran	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Qatar	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Laos	1	0	0	1	0	5	0

Group 2

Feb 18 - Doha, Qatar
Palestine 8 (Alkord 10, Habaib 20, 32, Atura 43, Beshe 52, 86, Amar 76, Keshkesh 82)
Taiwan 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 500. **Ref:** Al-Yarimi (Yem)
Palestine: Saleh - Jundiya, Abdallah, Beshe, Alkord (Abujazar 63), Montero, Amar, Adauy, Atura (Keshkesh 61), Abualia, Habaib (Farran 69).
Taiwan: Yeh Hsien-chung - Chen Jeng-i, Wang Chien-hsiang (Tu Chia-po 46), Tsai Hui-kai (Kuo Chun-yi 83), Chiang Shih-lu, Chuang Yao-tsung, Wu Chun-i, Li Po-yuan (Wang Chia-cheng 36), Lin Kuei-pin, Chang Wu-yeh, Tu Ming-feng.

Feb 18 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 1 (Soliev 79)
Iraq 1 (Ahmed Alwan 58)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Srinivasan (Ind)
Uzbekistan: Polyakov - Alikulov, Ashurmatov, Shirshov, Djeparov, Kapadze, Karpenko, Khvostunov (Kasimov 65), Shishelov (Soliev 73), Akopyants (Koshekev 46), Shatskikh.
Iraq: Noor - Basim, Haedr, Razak (Ahmed Assad 76), Jassim, Haytham, Hawar, Haydar, Abdul, Mahdi, Ahmed Alwan (Emad 84). *Sent off: Haedr 72min.*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Palestine	1	1	0	0	8	0	3
Iraq	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Uzbekistan	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Taiwan	1	0	0	1	0	8	0

Group 3

Feb 18 - Margao
India 1 (Renedy Singh 49)
Singapore 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 28,000. **Ref:** Yasrebi (Irn)
India: Mukherjee - Ghosh, Lawrence, Biswas, Gawli, Bhutia, Naik, Kumar Mandal, Ancheri (Venkatesh 26), D'Cunha (W Singh 68), Renedy Singh (Chakraborty 75).
Singapore: Hassan - Muhamed, Khaizan, Latiff, Daud, Subramani, Bennett, Tan Kim-leng, Shah (Casmir 54), Salleh (Manzur 71), Iskandar (Fadhil 89).

Feb 18 - Saitama
Japan 1 (Kubo 90)
Oman 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 60,207. **Ref:** Abdul Hamid (Mly)
Japan: Narazaki - N Yamada, Miyamoto, Alex, Tsuboi, H Nakata, Nakamura, Inamoto, Endo (Ogasawara 63), Yanagisawa (Kubo 46), Takahara (T Suzuki 82).
Oman: Al-Habsi - Ashoon, Ayil, Rabee'a, Al-Ghailani, Hubais, Hadid (A Mubarak 70), Bashir, Al-Maimani (Zayid 80), Shaaban, Al-Hosni.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
India	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Japan	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Oman	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Singapore	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Group 4

Feb 18 - Guangzhou
China 1 (Hao Haidong 75)
Kuwait 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Roman (Uzb)
China: Liu Yunfei - Yang Pu, Li Weifeng, Zheng Zhi, Wei Xin, Zheng Bin, Sun Jihai (Zhao Xuri 79), Xiao Zhanbo, Zhao Junzhe, Zhang Yuning, Hao Haidong (Zhou Haibin 90).
Kuwait: Kankouni - Asel, N Al-Shammari (Abdulaziz 79), Humaidan, Ateeki, Zadah, K Al-Shammari, Al-Hamad, A Al-Shammari, Al-Enezi, Al-Shuwaye (Al-Harbi 86). *Sent off: Al-Hamad 88min.*

Feb 18 - Kuantan
Malaysia 1 (Rosdi pen 39)
Hong Kong 3 (Ng Wai-chiu 16, Chu Siu-kei 87, Kwok Yue-hung 90)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Nagalingam (Sin)
Malaysia: Mohd Hamsani - Yuzaiman, Faizal, Syamsul, Hairuddin, Liew (Saravanan 46), Eddy, Nanthan, Muhammad Kaironnisam (Tengku 69), Nizaruddin, Rosdi (Chan 90).
Hong Kong: Fan Chun-yip - Man Pei-tak, Ng Wai-chiu, Lau Chi-keung, Law Chun-bong (Cheung Sai-ho 90), Akandu (Chan Ho-man 58), Chu Siu-kei, Sham Kwok-keung (Kwok Yue-hung 63), Chan Wai-ho, Luk Koon-pong, Lee Wai-man.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hong Kong	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
China	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Kuwait	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Malaysia	1	0	0	1	1	3	0

Group 5

Feb 18 - Al Ain City
United Arab Emirates 1 (Rashid 22)
Thailand 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Sun (Chn)
UAE: Abdulla - A R Jumaa, Msarri, A S Jumaa, Fakher, Rashed, Abdulrahman, S Khamis, Omar (Abbas 69), Rashid (Saad 65), Khalid Ali (Suhail 83).
Thailand: Kosin - Niweat, Thanongsak, Choketawee, Sarayoot, Thawatchai (Pichitpong 71), Nirut, Kiatisuk, Datsakorn (Sakda 58), Issawa, Sutee.

Feb 18 - Sana'a
Yemen 1 (Al-Selwi pen 64)
North Korea 1 (Hong Yong-jo 85)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Husain (Bhn)
Yemen: Abdulkhaleq - Al-Baiti, Al-Baadani, Alwah, Al-Safi, Al-Edresi, Al-Shekri (Al-Qor 66), Al-Naggar, Basuki (Baleid 88), Sharyan, Al-Selwi (Hussein 84).
North Korea: Sim Sung-chol - Ri Myong-sam, So Hyok-chol, Kim Yong-jun (Ji Yun-nam 81), Kim Yong su, Ri Kum-dong (Pak Nam-chol 46), Sin Yong-nam (Ri Kwang-chon 82), Han Song-chol, Jang Sok-chol, Nam Song-chol, Hong Yong-jo.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UAE	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
North Korea	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Yemen	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Thailand	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Group 6

Feb 18 - Muharraq
Bahrain 2 (A Hubail 62, 74)
Syria 1 (Rafe 81)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Kunthama (Tha)
Bahrain: Saaed - Al-Kawari, Abdulrahman, Hasan, H Ahmed, Jalal, Al-Musawi, Basheer, Yousuf, Salmeen (M Hubail 56), A Hubail (Farhan 79).
Syria: Saeed - Al-Afash, Aqraa, Dyab, Zaher, Al-Khatib, Mohammad, Shekhelshra, Al-Amna (Sayed 60), Radawi (Ali 88), Sari (Rafe 68). *Sent off: Mohammad 86min.*

Feb 18 - Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan 1 (Berezovsky 10)
Tajikistan 2 (Burkhanov 30, 54)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 11,000. **Ref:** Lutfullin (Uzb)
Kyrgyzstan: Djalilov - Sydykov, Vyacheslav, Salo, Sharapov, Chertkov, Ishmakov, Harchenko, Berezovsky (Kniazev 68), Boldygin (Ishenbaev 83), Philipas (Prianishnikov 46).
Tajikistan: Khabibulloev - Fuzailov, Turdiev, Zuvaydov, Irgashev, Umarbaev, Kholomatov, Burkhanov, Toukthaev (Khakberdiev 83), Shamsiev (Sharipov 68), Norkulov (Rahimov 31).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bahrain	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Tajikistan	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Kyrgyzstan	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Syria	1	0	0	1	1	2	0

Group 7

Feb 18 - Suwon
South Korea 2 (Cha Doo-ri 33, Cho Byung-kuk 50)
Lebanon 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 28,425. **Ref:** Al-Dosari (Sau)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Choi Jin-cheul, Kim Nam-il, Kim Tae-young, Park Ji-sung, Seol Ki-hyeon (Lee Chun-soo 53), Song Chong-gug, Lee Young-pyo, Cha Doo-ri, Ahn Jung-hwan, Cho Byung-kuk.
Lebanon: Samad - Halawi, Kinaan, Mohammed, Fernandez, A Al-Attar, O Al-Attar, Hamiye, Abbas Ali Atwi (Al-Jamal 78), Shahoud (Hassoun 83), Kassas (Naserdeen 57).

Feb 18 - Hanoi
Vietnam 4 (Phan Van Tai Em 10, 60, Nguyen Minh Hai 14, Pham Van Quyen pen 80)
Maldives 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Fong (HK)
Vietnam: Nguyen The Anh - Le Van Truong, Nguyen Huy Hoang, Nguyen Minh Hai, Pham Van Quyen, Nguyen Huu Thang, Nguyen Manh Dung, Phan Van Tai Em, Le Hong Minh (Le Quoc Vuong 71), Tran Truong Giang (Nguyen Trung Kien 69), Nguyen Minh Phuong (Phung Van Nhien 79).
Maldives: Imran Mohamed - Ghani, Ghanee, S M Ibrahim, Nizam, Jameel, Azeem, Luthfy, Naaz (Nazeeh 35), Fazeel (Shiyam 82), Thariq (I Ibrahim 67).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Vietnam	1	1	0	0	4	0	3
South Korea	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Lebanon	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Maldives	1	0	0	1	0	4	0

Group 8

Feb 18 - Riyadh
Saudi Arabia 3 (I Al-Shahrani 4, 38, Al-Qahtani 45)
Indonesia 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 1,000. **Ref:** Al-Ghafary
Saudi Arabia: Sharifi - Ahmed D Al-Dosari, Tukar, Al-Montasheri, I Al-Shahrani, Khariri, K Al-Dosari, Al-Qahtani (Al-Meshal 79), Noor (B Al-Dosari 70), Al-Saqri (Al-Janoubi 81).
Indonesia: Kartiko - Setyabudi, Ali, Sugiantoro, Uston (Kurniawan 79), Astaman, Budi (Aiboi 73), Gede, Laala, Saputra, Bambang (Tecuari 89).

Feb 18 - Ashgabat
Turkmenistan 2 (Ovekov 40, N Bayramov 56)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Al-Bannai (UAE)
Turkmenistan: B Berdiyev - Haydarov, Gochkuliev, Saparov, Agayev, N Bayramov, V Bayramov, Ovekov, Dourduev (Bordolimov 46), O Berdiyev (Kuliev 73), Didar Urazov (Agabaev 62).
Sri Lanka: Thilakaratne - Geegange, S Mudiyanselage, Steinwall, Weerarathna, Edribandanage, R Mudiyanselage, Raheem, A L Mohamed, Fernando, I Mohamed (Acharige 8).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Turkmenistan	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Sri Lanka	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Indonesia	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

Group winners advance to 2nd stage

CONCACAF

1st stage

Group 1

Feb 28 - St George's - Game 1, 1st leg
Grenada 5 (Bishop 34, Phillip 39, Augustine 72, A Modeste 81, Rennie 90)
Guyana 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
Grenada: K Baptiste - James, F Baptiste, Bishop (Rennie 75), Joseph, A Modeste, P Modeste (Morris 60), Benjamin, Phillip (Augustine 64), B Bubb, Charles.
Guyana: Hendricks - Lowe, Jilgeous, Moore, Carroll, McKinnon, Hernandez (Harris 70), G Richardson (Abrams 87), Beveney, Archer, Jerome (Durant 62). *Sent off: Hendricks 61min.*

Group 2

Feb 29 - Hamilton - Game 1, 1st leg
Bermuda 13 (Ming 5, 20, 50, Nusum 15, 54, 60, K Smith 36, Bean 41, 52, Steede 43, Wade 77, Simons 83, Burgess 87)
Montserrat 0
HT: 6-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Kennedy (USA)
Bermuda: Hall - Thomas, K Jennings, Burgess, Lewis, Steede (Hill 66), Wade, Nusum, Bean (Simons 70), K Smith (Coddington 62), Ming.
Montserrat: Joyce - Thompson (Buffonge 66), McLean (Laborde 46), Rodney, Williams, Antoine, Farrell, Ponde (Henry 76), Dyer, Howson, Clifford.

Group 3

Feb 18 - Miami, USA - Game 1, 1st leg
Haiti 5 (Peguero 9, Descollines 42, 45, 49, Corriolan 70)
Turks & Caicos Islands 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Stott (USA)
Haiti: Gabart - Corriolan, Descollines, Desir, Gilles, Santcius, Chery, Bruny, Dorcelus (Romulus 46), Boucicaut (Maxo 79), Peguero (Lormera 65).
Turks & Caicos Is: Gregg - D Glinton, Thompson, Gannon, Harvey, Cook, P Slattery, G Glinton, Charles (Bruno 66), Crosbie (Shearer 26), Reid (Savage 76).

Feb 21 - Hialeah, USA - Game 1, 2nd leg
Turks & Caicos Islands 0
Haiti 2 (Lormera pen 9, Harvey og 42)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Valenzuela (USA)
Haiti 7-0 on agg; meet Jamaica in Game 2
Turks & Caicos Is: Gregg - Thompson, P Slattery, Gannon, Crosbie, Harvey, D Glinton, Cook, Bruno (Duffy 85), Shearer (J Slattery 79), Charles (Stokes 76).
Haiti: Beauzile - Desir, Gilles, Bruny, Gracien, Lormera, Germain, Dieuphene, Romulus (Maxo 63), Santcius (Chery 67), Corriolan (Richardson 53).

Group 4

Feb 22 - Tortola - Game 1, 1st leg
British Virgin Islands 0
St Lucia 1 (Elva 54)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 800. **Ref:** Stewart (Jam)
British Virgin Is: Butler - P Williams, Hall, Isaac, Simmons, Morris, Cain, T Williams, Thomas (Lennon 65), Parris (Roach 57), Noble (Greene 57).
St Lucia: Deterville - E Joseph, Jean, Valcin, V Joseph, Emmanuel (Alcide 90), Mark, Tobie, Kirton, Skeete (Samuel 77), Elva (Cadet 66).

Group 5

Feb 22 - Grand Cayman - Game 1, 1st leg
Cayman Islands 1 (Elliot 72)
Cuba 2 (More 52, Marten 89)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Sibrian (ES)
Cayman Islands: Coleman - Berry, Elliot, Watler, Whittaker, Thomas, F Wilks, Fisher (Kelly 7), Brown, Hill (Challenger 68), Anderson (Rowe 83). *Sent off: Kelly 76min.*
Cuba: Molina - Marquez, Cruzata, Minoso, L Perez, Cervantes, Marten, More, Vergara (Pedraza 46), Herrera (Ramirez 81), Pereira (Aquino 66).

Group 6

Feb 28 - Oranjestad - Game 1, 1st leg
Aruba 1 (M Escalona 89)
Surinam 2 (Felter pen 54, Zinhagel 63)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,108. **Ref:** Moreno (Pan)
Aruba: Pantophlet - Celaire, Valdez, Figaroa, D Escalona, R Lake, Ruiz (Mackay 46), Gomez, M Escalona, Lampe (Brison 75), Zschubschen (Cabrera 69).
Surinam: Blokland - Doelbakir, Amelo, Felter, Linger, Uralime (Kinsaini 79), Sandvliet, Panka, Lupson, Van Engel (Ceder 85), Loswijk (Zinhagel 61).

Group 7

Feb 18 - St John's - Game 1, 1st leg
Antigua & Barbuda 2 (W Roberts 42, Clarke 89)
Dutch Antilles 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** Navarro (Can)
Antigua & Barbuda: J Simon - Dublin, Christian, S Anthony, Cyrillien, Jeffers, Clarke, Skepple, Julian (Tyio Simon 66), T Thomas (Gregory 76), W Roberts (Byers 54).
Dutch Antilles: Homoet - Cijntje (Franken 63), Martha, Winklaar, Mauris, Wau, Hernandez, Kantelberg (Siberie 32), Roos, Victoria (Brunkaard 76), Hose.

Group 10

Feb 18 - St Thomas/St John - Game 1, 1st leg
US Virgin Islands 0
St Kitts & Nevis 4 (Huggins 29, Lake 52, 65, G Isaac 63)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 225. **Ref:** Brizan (T&T)
US Virgin Is: Jones - Arnold, Ferguson, Wrensford, Appleton (Franseca 54), Thomas, Babb, Perez, Bailey, Bannis (Alphonse 74), Taylor (Dominique 68).
St Kitts & Nevis: Benjamin (Taylor 88) - Lewis, T Riley, Lawrence, Jeffers, G Isaac, Hodge, Huggins, Lake, Sargeant (J Francis 67), K Saddler (Warner 67).

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

In Tunisia

Group A

Jan 24 - Rades, Tunis
Tunisia 2 (Jaziri 26, Santos 56)
Rwanda 1 (Elias 31)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Evehe Divine (Cam)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Hagui, Ayari, Jaidi, Badra, Mnari (H Trabelsi 86), Nafti, Chedli (Bouazizi 66), Benachour, Santos, Jaziri (Jedidi 81). *Sent off: Benachour 60min.*
Rwanda: Nkunzingoma - Ndikumana, Bizimana, Bizagwira, Ntaganda, Sibomana, Elias, Nshimiyimana, Makasi (Lomani 69), Mbonabucya (Gatete 69), Karekezi. *Sent off: Sibomana 56min.*

Jan 25 - El Menzah, Tunis
DR Congo 1 (Masudi 30)
Guinea 2 (A T Camara 68, Feindouno 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Aboubacar (IvC)
DR Congo: Tokala - Muzinga, Mubiala, Kamudimba, Dinzey (Ndiwa 85), Luntala, Ilunga, Masudi, Mpiana (Kalulika 73), Lua Lua, Mbayo (Kabamba 76).
Guinea: Kemoko Camara - Balde, S Bah, Conte, Morlaye Soumah, Feindouno, Sow, Youla, O Camara, A T Camara (S Bangoura 68), Mansare.

Jan 28 - Bizerte
Guinea 1 (A T Camara 48)
Rwanda 1 (K Kamanzi 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Sowe (Gam)
Guinea: Kemoko Camara - Balde, S Bah, Conte, Morlaye Soumah, Feindouno, Sow (Kader Camara 78), O Camara, Youla (S Bangoura 86), A T Camara, Mansare.
Rwanda: Nkunzingoma - Ndikumana, Bizagwira, Ntaganda, Bitana, M Kamanzi, Nshimiyimana, Elias, Karekezi (Mbonabucya 64), Gatete (Makasi 46), Lomani (K Kamanzi 74).

Jan 28 - Rades, Tunis
Tunisia 3 (Santos 54, 87, Braham 65)
DR Congo 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Damon (SAf)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Badra, Hagui, Saidi, Ayari, Nafti (H Trabelsi 46), Mnari, Ghodhbane, Braham, Jedidi (Santos 17), Mhadhebi (Bouazizi 76).
DR Congo: Lukata - Ilunga, Muzinga, Mubiala, Kamudimba, Dinzey (Matingou 45), Luntala, Masudi (Nzuzi 67), Mbayo (Ngoy 58), Kalulika, Lua Lua. *Sent off: Lua Lua 38min.*

Feb 1 - Rades, Tunis
Tunisia 1 (Benachour 58)
Guinea 1 (A T Camara 84)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Tessema (Eth)
Tunisia: Azaiez - H Trabelsi (Ayari 46), Saidi, Jaidi, Yahia, Bouazizi, Chedli, Benachour, Jaziri (Hagui 90), Mhadhebi (Mnari 67), Santos.
Guinea: Kemoko Camara - Balde, S Bah, Conte, K Sylla, Feindouno (Youla 80), Sow, Abdoulkarim Sylla (Mansare 63), O Camara, S Bangoura, A T Camara (Drame 89).

Feb 1 - Bizerte
DR Congo 0
Rwanda 1 (Makasi 73)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 700. **Ref:** Ndoye (Sen)
DR Congo: Kidiaba - Mwamba, Muzinga, Mubiala (Kamudimba 61), Kisombe, Ilunga, Matingou, Nzuzi (Masudi 80), Mbala (Mbayo 64), Kabamba, Mpiana.
Rwanda: Nkunzingoma - Bizimana, Ndikumana, Ntaganda, Rusanganwa (Habyarimana 54), M Kamanzi, Karekezi (Mulisa 29), K Kamanzi (Munyaneza 64), Sibomana, Makasi, Mbonabucya.

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Guinea	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
Rwanda	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
DR Congo	3	0	0	3	1	6	0

Group B

Jan 26 - Bizerte
Kenya 1 (Mulama 58)
Mali 3 (Sissoko 27, Kanoute 63, 82)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Tessema (Eth)
Kenya: Onyiso - Waweru (Opiyo 88), Kassim, Otieno, Juma, Mulama, Shaban, Muiruri (Ake 73), Mambo, Okoth, Oliech.
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - Diamoutene (D Sidibe 67), F Diawara, A Coulibaly, Thiam, S Traore, M Diarra, S Coulibaly, S Keita (B Toure 88), Sissoko, Kanoute.

Jan 26 - El Menzah, Tunis
Burkina Faso 0
Senegal 0
Att: 2,000. **Ref:** Guezzaz (Mor)
Burkina Faso: Soulama - M Ouattara, Lamine Traore, Coulibaly, R Ouedraogo, Kere, Panandetiguiri, Kambou, A Toure, Dagano, Cisse (T Barro 65).
Senegal: Sylva - Daf, P M Diop, Diawara, Coly (Beye 58), A Cisse, H Camara, Diao, Diouf, Ndoye (P B Diop 80), Niang (Kamara 69).

Jan 30 - Bizerte
Kenya 0
Senegal 3 (Niang 4, 30, P B Diop 18)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 13,500. **Ref:** Abd El Fatah (Egy)
Kenya: Onyiso - Opiyo, Kassim, Otieno, Gikenyi, Mulama, Ake (Omondi 61), Juma, Mambo (Muiruri 78), Okoth (Sunguti 89), Oliech.
Senegal: Sylva - Daf (Beye 85), I Faye, P M Diop, Diatta, Diouf (Kamara 69), A Cisse, Diao, P B Diop, H Camara, Niang (Mendy 69).

Jan 30 - El Menzah, Tunis
Burkina Faso 1 (Minoungou 50)
Mali 3 (Kanoute 33, M Diarra 37, S Coulibaly 78)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** Shelmani (Lby)
Burkina Faso: Soulama - M Ouattara, Panandetiguiri, Lamine Traore, Coulibaly, R Ouedraogo (Cisse 82), Kere, Kambou, A Toure (Minoungou 46), Dagano, T Barro (Zoundi 69).
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - F Diawara, A Coulibaly, Thiam, S Traore, D Sidibe, Sissoko (David Coulibaly 60), M Diarra, B Toure (Diamoutene 82), S Coulibaly (Demba 90), Kanoute.

Feb 2 - El Menzah, Tunis
Mali 1 (D Traore 33)
Senegal 1 (Beye 45)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 7,550. **Ref:** Evehe Divine (Cam)
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - S Traore, F Diawara, Diamoutene, A Coulibaly, David Coulibaly (D Sidibe 65), S Keita, M Diarra, Sissoko (B Toure 75), Demba (S Coulibaly 82), D Traore.
Senegal: Sylva - Beye, Diatta, I Faye, Diao, Sylvain N'Diaye (Ndoye 79), P M Diop, P B Diop, Diouf, H Camara, Niang (Sakho 74).

Feb 2 - Bizerte
Burkina Faso 0
Kenya 3 (Ake 50, Oliech 63, Baraza 83)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,550. **Ref:** Sowe (Gam)
Burkina Faso: Kabore - M Ouattara, Coulibaly, O Traore (Zoundi 65), R Ouedraogo, Tall (T Barro 46), A Ouattara, Minoungou, Kere, Dagano, Balbone (Cisse 36). *Sent off: R Ouedraogo 76min.*
Kenya: D Ochieng - Otieno, Shaban, Gikenyi (Oyombe 38), Juma, Mulama, Ake (Sunguti 80), Opiyo, Mambo, Oliech, Okoth (Baraza 57).

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mali	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Senegal	3	1	2	0	4	1	5
Kenya	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Burkina Faso	3	0	1	2	1	6	1

Group C

Jan 25 - Sfax
Zimbabwe 1 (P Ndlovu 46)
Egypt 2 (Abdelhamid 57, Barakat 62)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 22,000. **Ref:** Lassina Pare (BuF)
Zimbabwe: Murambadoro - Mpofu, Kapenya, Tembo, Mbwando, Nyandoro, Muhoni (Luphahla 65), Yohane, Nengomasha, Sawu (Wilfred Mugeyi 53), P Ndlovu.
Egypt: N El-Sayed - El-Saqqa, T El-Sayed, Al-Tabei, Abdelhamid, T Said (Fathi 70), Emam (Barakat 61), A Hassan, H Said, Hossam, Belal (Khashaba 84).

Jan 25 - Sousse
Algeria 1 (Zafour 51)
Cameroon 1 (Mboma 44)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Codjia (Ben)
Algeria: Gaouaoui - Beloufa (Zafour 46), Aribi, Ziani, Yahia, Mansouri, Kraouche (Hadjadj 88), Belmadi (Achiou 78), Mamouni, Cherrad, Boutabout.
Cameroon: I C Kameni - Perrier Doumbe, Mettomo, Song, Tchato (Atouba 63), Geremi, Mbami, Djemba Djemba, Idrissou (Ngom Kome 86), Eto'o, Mboma.

Jan 29 - Sfax
Cameroon 5 (Mboma 31, 44, 64, Mbami 39, 66)
Zimbabwe 3 (P Ndlovu 8, pen 46, Nyandoro 88)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Aboubacar (IvC)
Cameroon: I C Kameni - Tchato, Song, Atouba, Perrier Doumbe, Geremi (Ngom Kome 85), Djemba Djemba, Makoun (Mezague 75), Mbami, Eto'o, Mboma (Idrissou 70).
Zimbabwe: Murambadoro - Mpofu, Kapenya, Mbwando (A Ndlovu 70), Choto, Nyandoro, Yohane, Wilfred Mugeyi, Nengomasha, Luphahla, P Ndlovu.

Jan 29 - Sousse
Algeria 2 (Mamouni 13, Achiou 85)
Egypt 1 (Belal 26)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Algeria: Gaouaoui - Aribi, Zafour, Yahia, Ziani (Hadjadj 81), Kraouche, Mansouri, Belmadi (Achiou 56), Mamouni, Cherrad, Boutabout (Haddou 62). *Sent off: Mamouni 58min.*
Egypt: N El-Sayed - El-Saqqa (Khashaba 76), H Said, Al-Tabei, Fathi, Abdelhamid, T Said (Emam 83), A Hassan (Barakat 71), T El-Sayed, Hossam, Belal.

Feb 3 - Monastir
Cameroon 0
Egypt 0
Att: 20,000. **Ref:** Bujsaim (UAE)
Cameroon: I C Kameni - Perrier Doumbe, Song, Mettomo, Atouba, Geremi, Mbami, Djemba Djemba, Makoun (Olembe 53), Eto'o (N'Diefi 81), Mboma (Idrissou 63).
Egypt: A El-Sayed - El-Quabbani, El-Saqqa, Al-Tabei, Fathi, Ghali, Abdelhamid (Belal 46), T Said, A Hassan, Hossam, T El-Sayed.

Feb 3 - Sousse
Algeria 1 (Achiou 72)
Zimbabwe 2 (A Ndlovu 64, Luphahla 70)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Maillet (Sey)
Algeria: Gaouaoui - Aribi, Zafour, Haddou (Belmadi 75), Zaoui (Yahia 24), Ziani, Kraouche, Hadjadj, Achiou, Akrour, Fellahi (Cherrad 66).
Zimbabwe: Kapini - Choto, Mpofu, B Ndlovu, Tembo, Sibanda (Nyandoro 83), Shereni (Yohane 87), Nengomasha, Luphahla, P Ndlovu, A Ndlovu (Wilfred Mugeyi 85).

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon	3	1	2	0	6	4	5
Algeria	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Egypt	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Zimbabwe	3	1	0	2	6	8	3

Group D

Jan 27 - Monastir
Nigeria 0
Morocco 1 (Y Hadji 77)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Ndoye (Sen)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Yobo, Okoronkwo, Abbey, Babayaro, N Kanu (Ikedia 72), Okocha, Olofinjana, Utaka, Aiyegbeni (Agali 79), Aghahowa.
Morocco: Fouhami - Ouaddou, El-Karkouri, Naybet, Regragui, Kaissi, Zairi (Y Hadji 59), Kharja, Safri, Mokhtari (Yaacoubi 70), Chamakh.

Jan 27 - Sfax
Benin 0
South Africa 2 (Nomvete 58, 76)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Coulibaly (Mli)
Benin: Chitou - Chrysostome, Toklomety, Adjamossi, S Tchomogo, Latoundji, Oketola, Bocco, Ahoueya, Ogunbiyi (Oladipupo 63), Gaspoz (Moussoro 79).
South Africa: Baron - Molefe (Winstanley 81), Lekgetho, A Mokoena, Mabizela, Mhlongo, Moshoeu, Buckley, Zuma, Nomvete, Mayo.

Jan 31 - Monastir
Nigeria 4 (Yobo 4, Okocha pen 64, Odemwingie 80, 82)
South Africa 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Bujsaim (UAE)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Abbey, Yobo, Okoronkwo, Lawal, Ekwueme, Okocha, Olofinjana, Utaka, N Kanu (Odemwingie 67), Aghahowa (Ikedia 84).
South Africa: Baron - Molefe, Lekgetho, A Mokoena, Mabizela, Mhlongo (Mnguni 46), Moshoeu (Pule 86), Buckley, Zuma (Fredericks 74), Nomvete, Mayo.

Jan 31 - Sfax
Benin 0
Morocco 4 (Chamakh 15, Mokhtari 73, Ouaddou 75, El-Karkouri 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Maillet (Sey)
Benin: Chitou - Adjamossi, Toklomety, Remy (Ogunbiyi 56), Chrysostome, S Tchomogo, Ahoueya, Bocco (Suka 90), Gaspoz (Djaffo 71), Latoundji, O Tchomogo.
Morocco: Fouhami - Ouaddah, El-Karkouri, Naybet, Regragui, Kaissi (Mokhtari 62), Kharja, Yaacoubi (Alla 77), Safri, Zairi (Y Hadji 46), Chamakh.

Feb 4 - Sfax
Benin 1 (Latoundji 90)
Nigeria 2 (Lawal 35, Utaka 76)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Abd El Fatah (Egy)
Benin: Agueh - Suka, S Tchomogo (Remy 70), Chrysostome, Toklomety, Oladipupo (Agnide 74), Oketola, Ahoueya, Adjamossi, O Tchomogo, Latoundji.
Nigeria: Enyeama - Abbey, Yobo, Okoronkwo, Olofinjana (Ekong 88), Utaka (Ikedia 84), Okocha, Lawal, Udeze, N Kanu, Aghahowa (Odemwingie 66).

Feb 4 - Sousse
Morocco 1 (Safri pen 37)
South Africa 1 (Mayo 30)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Guirat (Tun)
Morocco: Fouhami - Ouaddou, El-Karkouri, Naybet, Regragui, Mokhtari (Yaacoubi 82), Y Hadji (Hdioued 90), Kaissi, Kharja, Safri, Zairi.
South Africa: Arendse - Molefe, Lekgetho, A Mokoena, Mabizela, Winstanley, T Mokoena (Pule 82), Buckley (Nhleko 62), Zuma, Nomvete, Mayo.

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morocco	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
Nigeria	3	2	0	1	6	2	6
South Africa	3	1	1	1	3	5	4
Benin	3	0	0	3	1	8	0

Top two from each group qualified for quarter-finals

Quarter-finals

Feb 7 - El Menzah, Tunis
Mali 2 (Kanoute 45, M Diarra 90)
Guinea 1 (Feindouno 15)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,450. **Ref:** Abd El Fatah (Egy)
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - S Traore, A Coulibaly, F Diawara, Diamoutene (M Traore 90), M Diarra, B Toure (S Keita 79), S Coulibaly, D Sidibe, Kanoute, D Traore (Sissoko 60).
Guinea: Kemoko Camara - Balde, S Bah, Morlaye Soumah (Conte 74), O Camara, K Sylla, Feindouno, Sow (S Bangoura 90), Mansare, A T Camara, Youla.

Feb 7 - Rades, Tunis
Tunisia 1 (Mnari 65)
Senegal 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 57,000. **Ref:** Bujsaim (UAE)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Ayari, Jaidi, Hagui, Badra, Benachour, Bouazizi, Mnari (Chedli 88), Nafti, Santos (Mhadhebi 90), Jaziri (Braham 78).
Senegal: Sylva - Baye, Diatta, P M Diop, I Faye, P B Diop, Diao (Niang 74), H Camara, A Cisse, Diouf, Sakho (Kamara 85).

Feb 8 - Monastir
Cameroon 1 (Eto'o 42)
Nigeria 2 (Okocha 45, Utaka 73)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Guezzaz (Mor)
Cameroon: I C Kameni - Perrier Doumbe, Tchato (Idrissou 62), Song, Mettomo, Atouba, Mbami, Geremi, Djemba Djemba, Eto'o, Mboma (N'Diefi 78).
Nigeria: Enyeama - Yobo, Okoronkwo, Abbey, Udeze, N Kanu (Enakarhire 90), Okocha, Lawal, Olofinjana, Utaka, Odemwingie (Ikedia 89).

Feb 8 - Sfax
Morocco 3 (Chamakh 90, Y Hadji 113, Zairi 120)
Algeria 1 (Cherrad 83)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 20,000.
Ref: Shelmani (Lby)
Morocco: Fouhami - Ouaddou, Naybet, El-Karkouri (Y Hadji 86), Regragui, Kaissi (Yaacoubi 69), Safri, Mokhtari, Kharja (Alioui 90), Zairi, Chamakh.
Algeria: Gaouaoui - Beloufa, Aribi, Yahia, Mansouri, Kraouche, Belmadi (Ziani 72), Achiou, Mamouni (Zafour 98), Boutabout (Akrour 78), Cherrad.

Semi-finals

Feb 11 - Rades, Tunis
Tunisia 1 (Badra pen 82)
Nigeria 1 (Okocha pen 66)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 56,000. **Ref:** Codjia (Ben)
Tunisia 5-3 on pens
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Hagui, Jaidi, Badra, Clayton (H Trabelsi 90), Chedli (Mhadhebi 105), Bouazizi, Nafti, Mnari (Benachour 73), Jaziri, Santos.

Nigeria: Enyeama - Abbey, Yobo, Okoronkwo, Udeze, Olofinjana, Utaka, Okocha, Lawal (Ekwueme 68), N Kanu (Ikedia 85), Odemwingie.

Feb 11 - Sousse
Mali 0
Morocco 4 (Mokhtari 13, 57, Y Hadji 80, Baha 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Aboubacar (IvC)
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - F Diawara (M Traore 70), A Coulibaly, Thiam, S Traore, David Coulibaly (B Toure 46), M Diarra, D Sidibe (S Keita 61), S Coulibaly, D Traore, Kanoute.
Morocco: Fouhami - Roumani, Naybet, Ouaddou, Regragui (Hdioued 67), Kaissi, Yaacoubi (Chihab 59), Safri, Mokhtari, Y Hadji (Baha 86), Chamakh.

Third-place play-off

Feb 13 - Monastir
Nigeria 2 (Okocha 17, Odemwingie 47)
Mali 1 (Abouta 70)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Sowe (Gam)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Abbey (Orjinta 46), Yobo, Enakarhire, Udeze, Okocha, Ekong, Ekwueme (Lawal 90), Ikedia (N Kanu 78), Utaka, Odemwingie.
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - Diamoutene (Kone 90), S Traore, A Coulibaly, F Diawara, M Diarra, D Sidibe, D Traore, Sissoko (David Coulibaly 90), Kanoute (Mamady Sidibe 65), Abouta.

Squads

ALGERIA

GOALKEEPERS
16 Mohamed BENHAMOU (Paris SG, Fra)
12 Lounes GAOUAOUI (JS Kabylie)
1 Hicham MEZAIR (USM Alger)

DEFENDERS
5 Salim ARIBI (USM Alger)
4 Samir BELOUFA (Mouscron, Blg)
3 Moulay HADDOU (MC Oran)
18 Slimane RAHO (JS Kabylie)
21 Anther YAHIA (Bastia, Fra)
13 Brahim ZAFOUR (JS Kabylie)
17 Samir ZAOUI (ASO Chlef)

MIDFIELDERS
22 Hocine ACHIOU (USM Alger)
10 Djamel BELMADI (Al Ittihad, Qat)
20 Fodil HADJADJ (Nantes, Fra)
8 Nasredine KRAOUCHE (Gent, Blg)
19 Mamar MAMOUNI (La Louviere, Blg)
6 Yazid MANSOURI (Coventry, Eng)
2 Abdelnasser OUADAH (Ajaccio, Fra)
15 Karim ZIANI (Troyes, Fra)

FORWARDS
9 Nassim AKROUR (Troyes, Fra)
11 Mansour BOUTABOUT (Gueugnon, Fra)
7 Abdelmalek CHERRAD (Nice, Fra)
14 Fares FELLAHI (ES Setif)

COACH
Rabah SAADANE

BENIN

GOALKEEPERS
16 Maxime AGUEH (Valence, Fra)
1 Rachad CHITOU (Dragons l'Oueme)

DEFENDERS
3 Dinalo ADIGO (Schonberg 95, Ger)
15 Anicet ADJAMOSSI (Bordeaux, Fra)
13 Moustapha AGNIDE (Lorient, Fra)
5 Damien CHRYSOSTOME (Padova, Ita)
17 Sylvain REMY (Clermont Foot, Fra)
12 Felicien SINGBO (Airdrie, Sco)
4 Samuel Emmanuel SUKA (Liberty Prof's, Gha)
18 Seidah TCHOMOGO (Lions Atakora)
8 Tony TOKLOMETY (Maccabi Netanya, Isr)

MIDFIELDERS
19 Jocelyn AHOUEYA (Mogas '90)
7 Romuald BOCCO (Niort, Fra)
2 Moussa LATOUNDJI (Energie Cottbus, Ger)
6 Jonas OKETOLA (Dragons l'Oueme)
20 Wassiou OLADIPUPO (JS Pobe)

FORWARDS
21 Rodrigue AKPAKOUN (La Roche sur Yon, Fra)
9 Laurent DJAFFO (unattached)
14 Alain GASPOZ (Aarau, Swi)
22 Kabirou MOUSSORO (Pau, Fra)
11 Muri OGUNBIYI (Enyimba, Nig)
10 Oumar TCHOMOGO (Guingamp, Fra)

COACH
Cecil Jones ATTUQUAYEFIO (Gha)

BURKINA FASO

GOALKEEPERS
22 Daouda COMPAORE (ASFA Yennenga)
1 Mohamed KABORE (Etoile Filante)
16 Abdoulaye SOULAMA (ASF Bobo-Dioulasso)

DEFENDERS
7 Amadou COULIBALY (Racing Bobo-Dioulasso)
19 Mohamed Ali DIALLO (ASFA Yennenga)
4 Jean-Michel LIADE Gnonka (RC Kouba, Alg)
18 Amadou TOURE (Mons, Blg)
5 Lamine TRAORE (Anderlecht, Blg)
15 Ousmane TRAORE (Lorient, Fra)

MIDFIELDERS
13 Bebe KAMBOU (Louhans-Cuiseaux, Fra)
8 Mahamoudou KERE (Charleroi, Blg)
20 Amara OUATTARA (RC Kadiogo)
2 Moussa OUATTARA (Creteil, Fra)
6 Rahim OUEDRAOGO (Twente, Hol)
12 Mady PANANDETIGUIRI (Bordeaux, Fra)
17 Amadou TALL (Etoile Filante)

FORWARDS
21 Hamidou BALBONE (USM Alger, Alg)
11 Tanguy BARRO (Niort, Fra)
10 Abdoulaye CISSE (Montpellier, Fra)
9 Beli Moumouni DAGANO (Guingamp, Fra)
14 Dieudonne MINOUNGOU (Tours, Fra)
3 Patrick ZOUNDI (Lokeren, Blg)

COACH
Jean-Paul RABIER (Fra)

CAMEROON

GOALKEEPERS
1 Idriss Carlos KAMENI (Le Havre, Fra)
17 Mathurin KAMENI (Cotonsport)
16 Amour Patrick TIGNYEMB (Tonnerre Yaounde)

DEFENDERS
5 Timothee ATOUBA (Basle, Swi)
15 Gustave BAHOKEN (Angers, Fra)
13 Lucien METTOMO (Kaiserslautern, Ger)
6 Pierre NJANKA (Sedan, Fra)
2 Jean-Joel PERRIER DOUMBE (Auxerre, Fra)
4 Rigobert SONG (Lens, Fra)
3 Bill TCHATO (Kaiserslautern, Ger)

MIDFIELDERS
19 Eric DJEMBA DJEMBA (Manchester Utd, Eng)
12 Ngassam FALEMI (Steaua Bucharest, Rom)
8 GEREMI Njitap (Chelsea, Eng)
14 Jean MAKOUN (Lille, Fra)
7 Modeste MBAMI (Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
21 Valery MEZAGUE (Montpellier, Fra)
22 Daniel NGOM KOME (Numancia, Spa)
20 Salomon OLEMBE (Leeds, Eng)

FORWARDS
9 Samuel ETO'O (Mallorca, Spa)
18 Mohamadou IDRISSOU (Hannover 96, Ger)
10 Patrick MBOMA (Tokyo Verdy, Jap)
11 Pius N'DIEFI (Al Ittihad, Qat)

COACH
Winfried SCHAFER (Ger)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

GOALKEEPERS
22 Muteba KIDIABA (TP Mazembe Englebert)
16 Papy LUKATA (AS Aviacao, Ang)
1 Paulin TOKALA (Primeiro Agosto, Ang)

DEFENDERS
14 Michel DINZEY (Eintracht Braunschweig, Ger)
15 Herita ILUNGA (Saint-Etienne, Fra)
5 Jean-Paul KAMUDIMBA (Nice, Fra)
20 Mundaba KISOMBE (AS Vita Club)
12 Franck MATINGOU (Bastia, Fra)
4 Cyrille MUBIALA (Ajax Cape Town, SAf)
3 Camille MUZINGA (Lokeren, Blg)
2 Felix Musasa MWAMBA (Orlando Pirates, SAf)

MIDFIELDERS
6 Tresor LUNTALA (Grasshopper, Swi)
10 Alain MASUDI (Sturm Graz, Aut)
18 Marcel MBAYO (Genclerbirligi, Tur)
8 Kangana NDIWA (Bolton, Eng)
13 Mbomboko NGOY (TP Mazembe Englebert)
21 Olivier NZUZI (Bregenz, Aut)

FORWARDS
11 Musasa KABAMBA (Kaizer Chiefs, SAf)
7 Dieudonne KALULIKA (TP Mazembe Englebert)
9 Lomana Tresor LUA LUA (Newcastle, Eng)
19 Biscotte MBALA (Daring Club Motema Pembe)
17 Merlin MPIANA (Otelul Galati, Rom)

COACH
Mick WADSWORTH (Eng)

EGYPT

GOALKEEPERS
16 Abdelwahed EL-SAYED (Zamalek)
1 Nader EL-SAYED (Al Ittihad)
22 Essam MAHMOUD (ENPPI)

DEFENDERS
15 Bechir AL-TABEI (Zamalek)
4 Emad EL-NAHHAS (Ismaili)
3 Wael EL-QUABBANI (Zamalek)
5 Abdelzaher EL-SAQQA (Genclerbirligi, Tur)
13 Tarek EL-SAYED (Zamalek)
2 Amr FAHIM (Ismaili)
6 Wael GOMA'A (Al Ahly)

MIDFIELDERS
8 Tamer ABDELHAMID (Zamalek)
12 Mohamed BARAKAT (Al Arabi, Qat)
14 Hazem EMAM (Zamalek)
7 Ahmed FATHI (Ismaili)
18 Hossam GHALI (Feyenoord, Hol)
17 Ahmed HASSAN (Besiktas, Tur)
20 Hadi KHASHABA (Al Ahly)
21 Hani SAID (Fiorentina, Ita)
11 Tarek SAID (Zamalek)

FORWARDS
19 Abdelhalim ALI (Zamalek)
10 Ahmed BELAL (Al Ahly)
9 Ahmed HOSSAM (Marseille, Fra)

COACH
Mohsen SALAH

GUINEA

GOALKEEPERS
22 Abdallah BAH (Nice, Fra)
16 Kemoko CAMARA (Hapoel Bnei Sachnin, Isr)
1 Mohamed KEITA (AS Kaloum)

DEFENDERS
6 Schumann BAH (Metz, Fra)
5 Bobo BALDE (Celtic, Sco)
12 Kader CAMARA (Cercle Brugge, Blg)
13 Ibrahim Sory CONTE (Lokeren, Blg)
4 Mamadi KABA (AS Kaloum)
17 Morlaye SOUMAH (Bastia, Fra)
8 Kanfory SYLLA (Charleroi, Blg)

MIDFIELDERS
19 Mangue CAMARA (AS Kaloum)
14 Ousmane CAMARA (unattached)
15 Sekou Oumar DRAME (Luthianas, Fra)
2 Pascal FEINDOUNO (Bordeaux, Fra)
3 Abdoul Salam SOW (Al Ittihad, Qat)
18 Abdoulaye Capi SYLLA (Tours, Fra)
20 Abdoulkarim SYLLA (Lokeren, Blg)

FORWARDS
9 Sambegou BANGOURA (Standard Liege, Blg)
10 Aboubacar Titi CAMARA (Al Siliya, Qat)
21 Alhassane KEITA (Zurich, Swi)
7 Fode MANSARE (Montpellier, Fra)
11 Souleymane YOULA (Genclerbirligi, Tur)

COACH
Michel DUSSUYER (Fra)

KENYA

GOALKEEPERS
22 Duncan OCHIENG (Mathare United)
13 Willis OCHIENG (Free State Stars, SAf)
1 Francis ONYISO (Ulinzi Stars)

DEFENDERS
21 Moses GIKENYI (St Michael, Sey)
3 Issa KASSIM (Mumias Sugar)
15 Philip OPIYO (Free State Stars, SAf)
4 Musa OTIENO (Santos, SAf)
14 Andrew OYOMBE (Tusker)
8 Adam SHABAN (Mathare United)
2 George WAWERU (Tusker)

MIDFIELDERS
19 Emmanuel AKE (AB Copenhagen, Den)
5 Tom JUMA (Friska Viljor, Swe)
17 Robert MAMBO (Gent, Blg)
6 Anthony MATHENGE (Thika United)
10 John MUIRURI (Gent, Blg)
7 Titus MULAMA (Mathare United)
20 Walter ODEDE (Mathare United)

FORWARDS
11 John BARAZA (IK Sylvia, Swe)
9 Mike OKOTH (Heusden-Zolder, Blg)
18 Dennis OLIECH (Al Arabi, Qat)
16 James OMONDI (Thika United)
12 Maurice SUNGUTI (Friska Viljor, Swe)

COACH
Jacob MULEE

MALI

GOALKEEPERS
16 Cheikh Oumar BATHILY (Djoliba)
1 Mahamadou SIDIBE (Aigaleo, Gre)
22 Fousseiny TANGARA (FC Mantois, Fra)

DEFENDERS
4 Adama COULIBALY (Lens, Fra)
2 Souleymane DIAMOUTENE (Perugia, Ita)
3 Fousseiny DIAWARA (Laval, Fra)
13 Ibrahima KONE (Jeanne d'Arc, Sen)
5 Ibrahim THIAM (Istres, Fra)
21 Mamary TRAORE (Grenoble, Fra)
17 Sammy TRAORE (Nice, Fra)

MIDFIELDERS
14 David COULIBALY (Chateauroux, Fra)
10 Soumaila COULIBALY (Freiburg, Ger)
6 Mahamadou DIARRA (Lyon, Fra)
12 Seydou KEITA (Lens, Fra)
11 Djibril SIDIBE (Chateauroux, Fra)
18 Mohamed Lamine SISSOKO (Valencia, Spa)
8 Bassala TOURE (Athinaikos, Gre)

FORWARDS
9 Janvier ABOUTA (Djoliba)
15 Abdoulaye DEMBA (Eendracht Aalst, Blg)
19 Frederic KANOUTE (Tottenham, Eng)
7 Mamady SIDIBE (Gillingham, Eng)
20 Dramane TRAORE (Ismaili, Egy)

COACH
Henri STAMBOULI (Fra)

MOROCCO

GOALKEEPERS
12 Tarik EL-JARMOUNI (Royal Armed Forces)
1 Khalid FOUHAMI (Academica, Por)
22 Nadir LAMYAGHRI (Wydad Casablanca)

DEFENDERS
21 Tarek CHIHAB (Zurich, Swi)
5 Talal EL-KARKOURI (Paris SG, Fra)
6 Noureddine NAYBET (Dep La Coruna, Spa)
4 Abdeslam OUADDOU (Rennes, Fra)
2 Oualid REGRAGUI (Ajaccio, Fra)
3 Akram ROUMANI (Genk, Blg)

MIDFIELDERS
19 Jamal ALIOUI (Perugia, Ita)
18 Hassane ALLA (MCO Oujda)
20 Youssef HADJI (Bastia, Fra)
8 Abdelkrim KAISSI (Rubin Kazan, Rus)
13 Houcine KHARJA (Ternana, Ita)
15 Youssef SAFRI (Coventry, Eng)
11 Mohamed YAACOUBI (Osasuna, Spa)

FORWARDS
9 Nabil BAHA (Naval 1° de Maio, Por)
14 Mustapha BIDODANE (Raja Casablanca)
17 Marouane CHAMAKH (Bordeaux, Fra)
10 Mourad HDIOUED (Litex Lovech, Bul)
16 Youssef MOKHTARI (Wacker Burghausen, Ger)
7 Jaouad ZAIRI (Sochaux, Fra)

COACH
Badou EZAKI

NIGERIA

GOALKEEPERS
22 Austin EJIDE (Etoile Sahel, Tun)
1 Vincent ENYEAMA (Enyimba)
12 Greg ETAFIA (Moroka Swallows, SAf)

DEFENDERS
15 George ABBEY (Macclesfield, Eng)
3 Celestine BABAYARO (Chelsea, Eng)
6 Joseph ENAKARHIRE (Standard Liege, Blg)
5 Isaac OKORONKWO (Wolverhampton, Eng)
18 Romanus ORJINTA (Enyimba)
16 Ifeanyi UDEZE (PAOK Salonika, Gre)
2 Joseph YOBO (Everton, Eng)

MIDFIELDERS
19 Ikpe EKONG (Shenyang Ginde, Chn)
13 Pius IKEDIA (RBC Roosendaal, Hol)
4 Nwankwo KANU (Arsenal, Eng)
11 Garba LAWAL (unattached)
10 Jay-Jay OKOCHA (Bolton, Eng)
14 Seyi OLOFINJANA (Brann Bergen, Nor)

FORWARDS
9 Victor AGALI (Schalke, Ger)
17 Julius AGHAHOWA (Shakhtar Donetsk, Ukr)
8 Yakubu AIYEGBENI (Portsmouth, Eng)
21 Ifeanyi EKWUEME (Wisla Plock, Pol)
20 Osaze ODEMWINGIE (La Louviere, Blg)
7 John UTAKA (Lens, Fra)

COACH
Christian CHUKWU

RWANDA

GOALKEEPERS
1 Patrick MBEU (APR)
22 Jean-Claude NDAGIJIMANA (Rayon Sports)
18 Ramadhani NKUNZINGOMA (APR)

DEFENDERS
21 Jean Remy BITANA (Rayon Sports)
5 Leandre BIZAGWIRA (Kiyovu Sports)
7 Canesius BIZIMANA (Mukura Victory)
3 Hamad NDIKUMANA (Gent, Blg)
13 Elias NTAGANDA (APR)
4 Abdul SIBOMANA (APR)

MIDFIELDERS
9 Joao ELIAS (Kortrijk, Blg)
2 Jean-Paul HABYARIMANA (APR)
19 Karim KAMANZI (Vise, Blg)
8 Michel KAMANZI (Betzdorf, Ger)
20 Jimmy MULISA (APR)
16 Eric NSHIMIYIMANA (APR)
6 Frederic RUSANGANWA (APR)

FORWARDS
10 Jimmy GATETE (APR)
11 Olivier KAREKEZI (APR)
17 Jean LOMANI (Power Dynamos, Zam)
14 Said Abed MAKASI (FC Brussels, Blg)
15 Desire MBONABUCYA (St Truiden, Blg)
12 Henri MUNYANEZA (Eendracht Aalst, Blg)

COACH
Ratomir DUJKOVIC (Ser)

SENEGAL

GOALKEEPERS
22 Kalidou CISSOKO (Jeanne d'Arc)
16 Oumar DIALLO (Diaraf Dakar)
1 Tony SYLVA (Monaco, Fra)

DEFENDERS
21 Habib BEYE (Marseille, Fra)
17 Ferdinand COLY (Perugia, Ita)
2 Omar DAF (Sochaux, Fra)
13 Lamine DIATTA (Rennes, Fra)
5 Souleymane DIAWARA (Sochaux, Fra)
4 Pape Malick DIOP (Lorient, Fra)
3 Ibrahima FAYE (Gent, Blg)

MIDFIELDERS
6 Aliou CISSE (Birmingham, Eng)
15 Salif DIAO (Liverpool, Eng)
19 Pape Bouba DIOP (Lens, Fra)
20 Abdoulaye FAYE (Lens, Fra)
8 Sylvain N'DIAYE (Marseille, Fra)
14 Ousmane NDOYE (Toulouse, Fra)

FORWARDS
7 Henri CAMARA (Wolverhampton, Eng)
11 El Hadji DIOUF (Liverpool, Eng)
9 Diomansy KAMARA (Modena, Ita)
12 Frederic MENDY (Saint-Etienne, Fra)
18 Mamadou NIANG (Strasbourg, Fra)
10 Lamine SAKHO (Leeds, Eng)

COACH
Guy STEPHAN (Fra)

SOUTH AFRICA

GOALKEEPERS
1 Andre ARENDSE (Mamelodi Sundowns)
16 Emille BARON (Lillestrom, Nor)
22 Wayne ROBERTS (Wits University)

DEFENDERS
20 Tony COYLE (Rostov, Rus)
7 David KANNEMEYER (Kaizer Chiefs)
3 Jacob LEKGETHO (Lokomotiv Moscow, Rus)
5 Mbulelo MABIZELA (Tottenham, Eng)
4 Aaron MOKOENA (Genk, Blg)
2 Thabang MOLEFE (Le Mans, Fra)
17 Neil WINSTANLEY (Wits University)

MIDFIELDERS
18 Delron BUCKLEY (Bochum, Ger)
10 Stanton FREDERICKS (Kaizer Chiefs)
13 Benson MHLONGO (Wits University)
8 Bennett MNGUNI (Rostov, Rus)
12 Tebeho MOKOENA (Jomo Cosmos)
19 John MOSHOEU (Kaizer Chiefs)
11 Jabu PULE (Kaizer Chiefs)
6 MacBeth SIBAYA (Rubin Kazan, Rus)

FORWARDS
21 Patrick MAYO (Kaizer Chiefs)
9 Nkosinathi NHLEKO (Dallas Burn, USA)
14 Siyabonga NOMVETE (Udinese, Ita)
15 Sibusiso ZUMA (FC Copenhagen, Den)

COACH
Styles PHUMO

TUNISIA

GOALKEEPERS
22 Khaled AZAIEZ (Club Africain)
1 Ali BOUMNIJEL (Rouen, Fra)
16 Khaled FADHEL (CS Sfaxien)

DEFENDERS
19 Anis AYARI (Stade Tunisien)
2 Khaled BADRA (Esperance)
20 Jose CLAYTON (Esperance)
3 Karim HAGUI (Etoile Sahel)
15 Radhi JAIDI (Esperance)
21 Karim SAIDI (Club Africain)
6 Hatem TRABELSI (Ajax, Hol)
4 Alaeddine YAHIA (Guingamp, Fra)

MIDFIELDERS
18 Slim BENACHOUR (Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
13 Riadh BOUAZIZI (Gaziantepspor, Tur)
14 Adel CHEDLI (Sochaux, Fra)
10 Kaies GHODHBANE (Diyarbakirspor, Tur)
12 Jouhar MNARI (Esperance)
8 Mehdi NAFTI (Racing Santander, Spa)

FORWARDS
9 Najeh BRAHAM (Eintracht Trier, Ger)
5 Ziad JAZIRI (Gaziantepspor, Tur)
17 Mohamed JEDIDI (Etoile Sahel)
7 Imed MHADHEBI (Etoile Sahel)
11 Francileudo dos SANTOS (Sochaux, Fra)

COACH
Roger LEMERRE (Fra)

ZIMBABWE

GOALKEEPERS
16 Tapuwa KAPINI (Highlanders)
19 Ephraim MAZARURA (Black Rhinos)
1 Energy MURAMBADORO (CAPS United)

DEFENDERS
22 Dickson CHOTO (Legia Warsaw, Pol)
5 Dazzy KAPENYA (Sporting Lions)
14 George MBWANDO (Alemannia Aachen, Ger)
2 Dumisani MPOFU (Umtata Bush Bucks, SAf)
4 Bhekithemba NDLOVU (Highlanders)
17 Harlington SHERENI (Guingamp, Fra)
6 Kaitano TEMBO (SuperSport United, SAf)

MIDFIELDERS
18 Alois BUNJIRA (Wits University, SAf)
7 Leo KURAUZVIONE (Dynamos)
8 Lazarus MUHONI (Black Rhinos)
20 Tinashe NENGOMASHA (Kaizer Chiefs, SAf)
3 Esrom NYANDORO (AmaZulu)
15 Ronald SIBANDA (AmaZulu)
11 Charles YOHANE (Wits University, SAf)

FORWARDS
21 Joel LUPHAHLA (AEP Paphos, Cyp)
10 Wilfred MUGEYI (Ajax Cape Town, SAf)
13 Adam NDLOVU (Dynamos, SAf)
12 Peter NDLOVU (Sheffield United, Eng)
9 Agent SAWU (Dynamos)

COACH
Sunday MARIMO

MALTA TOURNAMENT

In Valletta

Feb 14
Malta 0
Moldova 0
Att: 600. **Ref:** Vialichka (Bls)

Feb 14
Belarus Selection 1 (Tarasenko 89)
Estonia 2 (M Rooba 13, Lemsalu 45)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Casha

Feb 16
Belarus Selection 1 (V Hleb 41)
Moldova 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40. **Ref:** Attard (Mlt)

Feb 16
Malta 5 (Barbara 12, 60, Said 28, Turner 57, Zahra 87)
Estonia 2 (Zahhovaiko 16, Piiroja 44)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Orlic (Mol)

Feb 18
Malta 0
Belarus Selection 4 (Kornilenko 12, M Tsygalko 30, Biahanski 71, Lashankou 85)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Kaldma (Est)

Feb 18
Estonia 1 (Lindpere 58)
Moldova 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 100. **Ref:** Sammut (Mlt)

MALTA TOURNAMENT – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belarus Selection	3	2	0	1	6	2	6
Estonia	3	2	0	1	5	6	6
Malta	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Moldova	3	0	1	2	0	2	1

CYPRUS TOURNAMENT

Quarter-finals

Feb 18 - Achnas
Cyprus 0
Belarus 2 (Romaschenko 56, 70)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kailis (Cyp)
Cyprus: Morfis - M Nicolaou, Okkarides, Lambrou, Elia (S Georgiou 86), C Michael (Iakovou 78), N Nicolaou (Theodotou 53), Konstanti (Charalambous 46), Krassas (G Nicolaou 69), Yiasoumi, Garpozis (N Georgiou 46).
Belarus: Khomutovsky (Tumilovich 14) - Lavrik, Kulchy, Tarlovsky, Shtanyuk, Rovneiko, Kalachou, Bialkevich, A Hleb, Romaschenko, Kutuzov.

Feb 18 - Paphos
Hungary 2 (Szabics 63, Lisztes 75)
Armenia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 400. **Ref:** Jerasimu
Hungary: Babos - Komlosi, Dragoner, Bodor, C Feher (Bodnar 86), Dardai (Gera 69), Lisztes (Lendvai 83), Nemeth, Low, Szabics (Z Kovacs 83), P Kovacs (Torghelle 69).
Armenia: Ambartsumyan - Aleksanyan, Zecsin, Kirakosyan (Agvan Mkrtchyan 78), Hovsepyan, R Hachatryan (Tateosyan 80), Voskanyan (Banadenbuk 74), Melikyan, Artavazd Karamian (Grigoryan 61), Arman Karamian (Patuayan 63), Ara Hakopyan (G Petrosyan 71).

Feb 18 - Larnaca
Latvia 3 (Pahars 40, Laizans 45, 56)
Kazakhstan 1 (Aksenov 23)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Konstantinou (Cyp)
Latvia: Kolinko - Stepanovs, Astafjevs, Zemlinskis (Zakresevskis 90), Laizans, Zirnis, Isakovs, Bleidelis (Pucinsks 78), Verpakovskis (Rimkus 75), Rubins, Pahars (Kolesnicenko 78).
Kazakhstan: Novikov (Boichenko 60) - Lyapkin, Artemov (Skurin 69), Dubinsky, Musin, Bogomolov, Smakov, Lovchev, Aksenov, Karpovits (Zhumaskaliyev 64), Uzdenov (Mukanov 64).

Feb 18 - Larnaca
Romania 3 (Mutu 30, 70, Cernat 87)
Georgia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 300. **Ref:** Lajuks (Lat)
Romania: Stelea (Dolha 83) - Stoican (Tamas 78), Ghionea, Rada, Rat, F Petre (Contra 46), O Petre (Soava 71), Pancu (Tararache 43), Mitea (Cernat 46), Ganea (Bratu 62), Mutu.
Georgia: Gvaramadze (Mamaladze 83) - Kemoklidze, Amisulashvili, Tsereteli, Kvirkvelia, Daraselia, Nemsadze (Gabidauri 83), Gogoberishvili (Korgalidze 66), Akhalaia (Siradze 28), Kinkladze, S Iashvili.

Semi-finals

Feb 19 - Nicosia
Romania 2 (Danciulescu pen 32, D Niculae 49)
Belarus 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Theodotou (Cyp)
Romania: Dolha (Curca 90) - Tamas (Mihut 69), Iencsi, Ghionea (Rada 83), Stancu, Caramarin (F Petre 60), Tararache (Soava 46), Plesan (Alexa 77), Coman, Danciulescu (Marica 73), D Niculae.
Belarus: Sulima - Lavrik, Branfilov (Krapkovsky 46), Tarlovsky, Rovneiko (Shtanyuk 63), Kortiko, Khatskevich (Lanko 80), Kovba, Geraschenko (Kulchy 46), Romaschenko (Blizniuk 35), Bulyga (Vasilyuk 70).

Feb 19 - Limassol
Hungary 2 (Tokoli 82, Kenesei 85)
Latvia 1 (Stepanovs 64)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 500. **Ref:** Panayotis (Cyp)
Hungary: Vegh - Bojte, Stark, Z Peto (Lendvai 76), Bodnar, Molnar, Gera, Toth, Fuzi (Tokoli 73), Torghelle (Komlosi 90), Kenesei. *Sent off: Molnar 73min.*
Latvia: Vanins - Stepanovs, Pucinsks, Zemlinskis, Lobanovs (Karlsons 87), Zirnis, Isakovs, Kalnins, Kolesnicenko, Rubins, Rimkus (Blanks 73).

Third-place play-off

Feb 21 - Limassol
Belarus 4 (Bulyga 20, Romaschenko pen 73, pen 87, 90)
Latvia 1 (Zemlinskis pen 37)
HT: 1-1
Belarus: Sulima - Kulchy, Kovba, Kortiko, Tarlovsky, Branfilov, Rovneiko, Lavrik, Khatskevich (Geraschenko 80), Romaschenko, Bulyga.
Latvia: Pavlovs - Isakovs (Zakresevskis 20), Stepanovs, Zemlinskis, Zirnis, Bleidelis, Lobanovs (Smirnovs 76), Kolesnicenko (Zavoronkovs 73), Rubins, Rimkus (Blanks 73), Kalnins (Karlsons 69).

Final

Feb 21 - Nicosia
Romania 3 (Mihut 11, Danciulescu 89, Caramarin 90)
Hungary 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 400. **Ref:** Kapitanis (Cyp)
Romania: Curca - Stancu, Mihut, Iencsi (Rada 46), Alexa (Ghionea 90), Constantin, Plesan, F Petre (Caramarin 77), T Moldovan (D Niculae 56), Marica (Danciulescu 61), Cristea (Lungu 88).
Hungary: Vlaszak - Komlosi (Stark 46), Dragoner (Kenesei 63), Z Peto, Simek, Lendvai, Toth (Bodnar 70), Low (Bojte 80), Gera, P Kovacs (Z Kovacs 76), Tokoli.

5th-8th place play-offs

Feb 19 - Nicosia
Cyprus 3 (Charalambides 44, 55, Elia 73)
Georgia 1 (Gabidauri 56)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Kapitanis (Cyp)

Feb 19 - Paphos
Kazakhstan 3 (Zhumaskaliyev 53, 75, Finonchenko 76)
Armenia 3 (G Petrosyan 52, Artavazd Karamian 73, 80)
HT: 0-0
Kazakhstan 3-2 on pens

Feb 21 - Larnaca
Cyprus 2 (Charalambides 3, C Michael 8)
Kazakhstan 1 (Uzdenov 68)
HT: 2-0
Cyprus finished fifth; Kazakhstan sixth

Feb 21 - Nicosia
Georgia 0
Armenia 2 (Arman Karamian 42, Artavazd Karamian 52)
HT: 0-1
Armenia finished seventh; Georgia eighth

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

2nd rnd, 1st legs

February 24

Bayern Munich (Ger) 1 (Makaay 74)
Real Madrid (Spa) 1 (Roberto Carlos 84)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Bayern: Kahn - Sagnol, Kovac, Kuffour, Lizarazu (Salihamidzic 46), Demichelis (Jeremies 90), Ballack, Hargreaves, Ze Roberto, Makaay, Pizarro (Santa Cruz 75).
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Ivan Helguera, Raul Bravo, Roberto Carlos, Beckham, Guti, Figo, Zidane, Raul, Ronaldo (Solari 90).

Celta Vigo (Spa) 2 (Edu 26, Jose Ignacio 64)
Arsenal (Eng) 3 (Edu 17, 58, Pires 80)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Celta: Cavallero - Velasco, Sergio, Berizzo, Silvinho, Luccin, Jose Ignacio, Angel (Vagner 64), Mostovoi, Edu (Pinilla 75), Milosevic.
Arsenal: Lehmann - Lauren, Toure, Campbell, Clichy (Cygan 89), Ljungberg (Bentley 89), Edu, Vieira, Pires, Reyes (Kanu 78), Henry.

Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 2 (Izmailov 32, Maminov 59)
Monaco (Fra) 1 (Morientes 69)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 23,000. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Lokomotiv: Ovchinnikov - Sennikov, Asatiani, Pachinin, Gurenko, Evseev, Izmailov (Parks 79), Loskov, Maminov, Khokhlov (Nizhegorodov 83), Ashvetia (Obiorah 46).
Monaco: Roma - Ibarra, Rodriguez, Givet, Evra, Cisse, Bernardi, Zikos, Rothen, Prso (Adebayor 64), Morientes.

Sparta Prague (Cze) 0
Milan (Ita) 0
Att: 20,640. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Sparta: Blazek - Pergl, Hubschman, Johana, Labant, Poborsky, Kovac, Zelenka (Sivok 90), Michalik, I Gluscevic (Baranek 73), Stajner (V Gluscevic 85).
Milan: Dida - Cafu, Costacurta, Maldini, Pancaro, Gattuso, Pirlo, Seedorf, Kaka, Shevchenko, Inzaghi (Serginho 85).

February 25

Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) 1 (Luque 37)
Juventus (Ita) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Veissiere (Fra)
Deportivo: Molina - Scaloni, Jorge Andrade, Naybet, Romero, Sergio, Mauro Silva, Victor (Manuel Pablo 85), Valeron, Luque (Fran 81), Diego Tristan (Pandiani 69).
Juventus: Buffon - Thuram, Legrottaglie, Montero (Birindelli 56), Pessotto (Conte 63), Zambrotta, Tacchinardi, Appiah, Nedved, Del Piero, Trezeguet (Miccoli 46).

FC Porto (Por) 2 (McCarthy 29, 78)
Manchester United (Eng) 1 (Fortune 14)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 49,977. **Ref:** Fandel (Ger)
Porto: Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Jorge Costa, Ricardo Carvalho, Nuno Valente, Pedro Mendes, Maniche, Deco, Alenichev (Jankauskas 63), Carlos Alberto (Ricardo Fernandes 74), McCarthy (Bruno Moraes 82).
Man Utd: Howard - P Neville (O'Shea 69), G Neville, Brown, Fortune, Scholes, Butt, Keane, Giggs, Van Nistelrooy, Saha (Cristiano Ronaldo 75).
Sent off: Keane 87min.

Real Sociedad (Spa) 0
Lyon (Fra) 1 (Schurrer og 18)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 28,000. **Ref:** De Santis (Ita)
Sociedad: Westerveld - Lopez Rekarte, Kvarme, Schurrer, Aranzabal, Karpin, Xabi Alonso (Aranburu 74), Aliaga, Gabilondo (Lee 64), Nihat (De Paula 80), Kovacevic.
Lyon: Coupet - Deflandre, Edmilson, Muller, Sartre (Berthod 66), Govou (Dhorasoo 80), Essien, Diarra, Juninho, Malouda, Luyindula.

Stuttgart (Ger) 0
Chelsea (Eng) 1 (Fernando Meira og 12)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)
Stuttgart: Hildebrand - Hinkel, Fernando Meira, Bordon, Lahm, Meissner (Tiffert 46), Soldo, Hleb, Heldt (Cacau 66), Kuranyi, Szabics.
Chelsea: Cudicini - Johnson, Gallas, Terry, Bridge, Makelele, Geremi, Lampard, Gronkjaer (Duff 66), Gudjohnsen (Hasselbaink 73), Crespo (J Cole 89).

UEFA CUP

3rd rnd, 1st legs

February 26

Auxerre (Fra) 0
Panathinaikos (Gre) 0
Ref: Dougal (Sco)
Sent off: Kapo (Auxerre) 66min

Benfica (Por) 1 (Zahovic 59)
Rosenborg (Nor) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Allaerts (Blg)

Brondby (Den) 0
Barcelona (Spa) 1 (Ronaldinho 63)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)

Celtic (Sco) 3 (Larsson 3, 90, Sutton 12)
Teplice (Cze) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)

Club Brugge (Blg) 1 (Lange 40)
Debrecen (Hun) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Bozinovski (Mac)

Galatasaray (Tur) 2 (Murat 26, Cesar Prates 52)
Villarreal (Spa) 2 (Anderson 7, Riquelme 22)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Farina (Ita)
Sent off: Ballesteros (Villarreal) 61min

Gaziantepspor (Tur) 1 (Yusuf 19)
Roma (Ita) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Baskakov (Rus)

Groclin Grodzisk (Pol) 0
Bordeaux (Fra) 1 (Chamakh 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Messner (Aut)
Sent off: Costa (Bordeaux) 30min

Liverpool (Eng) 2 (Gerrard 67, Kewell 70)
Levski Sofia (Bul) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Temmink (Hol)

Marseille (Fra) 1 (Drogba pen 54)
Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk (Ukr) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kasnaferis (Gre)

Moscow Spartak (Rus) 0
Mallorca (Spa) 3 (Eto'o 67, Toni Gonzalez 81, Jesus Perera 85)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Yefet (Isr)

Parma (Ita) 0
Genclerbirligi (Tur) 1 (Skoko 60)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)

Perugia (Ita) 0
PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 0
Ref: Benes (Cze)

Sochaux (Fra) 2 (Frau 59, 81)
Internazionale (Ita) 2 (Vieri 8, Recoba 61)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Medina Cantalejo (Spa)

Valencia (Spa) 3 (Sissoko 25, Canobbio 43, David Navarro 90)
Besiktas (Tur) 2 (Pancu 17, 39)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Sars (Fra)

Valerenga (Nor) 1 (Normann 54)
Newcastle (Eng) 1 (Bellamy 38)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Gilewski (Pol)

3rd rnd, 2nd legs

March 3

Barcelona 2 (Luis Garcia 31, Cocu 43)
Brondby 1 (Nielsen 84)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Barcelona 3-1 on agg

Besiktas 0
Valencia 2 (Angulo 12, Juan Sanchez 57)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Messina (Ita)
Sent off: Zago (Besiktas) 90min
Valencia 5-2 on agg

Bordeaux 4 (Planus 41, Chamakh 42, 65, Riera pen 74)
Groclin Grodzisk 1 (Wieszczycki 90)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Gomes Costa (Por)
Sent off: Afanou (Bordeaux) 84min
Bordeaux 5-1 on agg

Debrecen 0
Club Brugge 0
Ref: Dauden Ibanez (Spa)
Brugge 1-0 on agg

Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk 0
Marseille 0
Ref: Larsen (Den)
Marseille 1-0 on agg

Genclerbirligi 3 (Daems pen 37, Ferrari og 81, Ali Tandogan 90)
Parma 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Poulat (Fra)
Sent off: Frey (Parma) 36min
Genclerbirligi 4-0 on agg

Internazionale 0
Sochaux 0
Ref: Bennett (Eng)
Sent off: Vieri (Inter) 86min
Agg 2-2. Inter on away goals

Levski Sofia 2 (G Ivanov 27, Simonovic 40)
Liverpool 4 (Gerrard 7, Owen 11, Hamann 43, Hyypia 68)
HT: 2-3. **Ref:** Frojdfeldt (Swe)
Liverpool 6-2 on agg

Mallorca 0
Moscow Spartak 1 (Samedov 44)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Bre (Fra)
Mallorca 3-1 on agg

Newcastle 3 (Shearer 20, Ameobi 47, 89)
Valerenga 1 (Hagen 25)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Braamhaar (Hol)
Newcastle 4-2 on agg

Panathinaikos 0
Auxerre 1 (Kalou 71)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
Auxerre 1-0 on agg

PSV Eindhoven 3 (Hofland 22, Kezman 43, 48)
Perugia 1 (Ferreira 88)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Iturralde Gonzalez (Spa)
PSV 3-1 on agg

Roma 2 (Emerson 23, Cassano 43)
Gaziantepspor 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Roma 2-1 on agg

Rosenborg 2 (Berg 7, Karadas 15)
Benfica 1 (Nuno Gomes 19)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Hrinak (Slk)
Sent off: Nuno Gomes (Benfica) 41min
Agg 2-2. Benfica on away goals

Teplice 1 (Masek 35)
Celtic 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)
Celtic 3-1 on agg

Villarreal 3 (Anderson 48, Roger 52, Riquelme 88)
Galatasaray 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Wegereef (Hol)
Villarreal 5-2 on agg

AUSTRIA

Feb 21: Austria Wien 0 Pasching 1; Karnten 0 Admira 0; Mattersburg 1 Grazer AK 4; Sturm Graz 0 Salzburg 0.
Feb 22: Bregenz 1 Rapid Wien 1.
Feb 28: Admira 0 Sturm Graz 0; Mattersburg 1 Bregenz 1; Pasching 1 Salzburg 0.
Feb 29: Grazer AK 0 Austria Wien 0.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	22	12	6	4	37	16	42
Grazer AK	22	12	5	5	36	21	41
Rapid Wien	21	11	6	4	36	27	39
Pasching	22	11	4	7	36	30	37
Bregenz	22	9	6	7	32	34	33
Admira	22	7	6	9	26	28	27
Mattersburg	22	5	8	9	23	36	23
Salzburg	22	6	3	13	27	26	21
Sturm Graz	22	4	8	10	20	29	20
Karnten	21	3	6	12	16	42	15

BELGIUM

Saturday, February 7

Beveren 2 (Kaiper 25, Romaric 54)
Anderlecht 3 (Dindane 66, Iachtchouk 78, Baseggio 83) Att: 8,000

Charleroi 2 (Cacciatore 17, Detal 90)
La Louviere 2 (Murcy 75, Vervalle 80) Att: 15,716

Germinal Beerschot 2 (Camara 68, Sneiders 86)
Cercle Brugge 1 (De Wulf 7) Att: 5,000

Heusden-Zolder 1 (Euvrard 63)
Gent 1 (Jarakovic 9) Att: 6,231

Lokeren 0
Mons 0 Att: 4,712

Standard 1 (Aliyu 13)
Lierse 1 (Thompson 89) Att: 19,780

Westerlo 3 (Paas 16, 63, Voets og 70)
St Truiden 0 Att: 5,500

Sunday, February 8

Club Brugge 4 (Verheyen 37, Ceh 73, Victor 86, Mendoza 89)
Royal Antwerp 0 Att: 24,341

Mouscron 3 (Pieroni 14, 17, pen 45)
Genk 1 (Claessens 32) Att: 8,000

Wednesday, February 11

La Louviere 0
Club Brugge 4 (Victor 47, 51, Mendoza 60, Ceh 65) Att: 6,500

Friday, February 13

Genk 1 (Roussel 35)
Standard 1 (Walasiak 41) Att: 24,829

Saturday, February 14

Anderlecht 2 (Wilhelmsson 60, Zewlakow 79)
Lokeren 1 (Dos Santos 66) Att: 23,500

Beveren 0
Westerlo 3 (Dosunmu 51, 89, Paas 57) Att: 5,000

Lierse 0
Mons 2 (Niemi 52, Casto 73) Att: 6,000

Royal Antwerp 3 (Evens 43, Goots 51, Gomez 64)
Charleroi 1 (Olufade 23) Att: 5,000

St Truiden 2 (Mbonabucya 21, 80)
Heusden-Zolder 1 (Oulare 56) Att: 6,500

Sunday, February 15

Cercle Brugge 1 (Arijs 79)
Mouscron 1 (Zewlakow 43) Att: 4,100

Gent 0
Club Brugge 1 (Simons pen 84) Att: 10,500

Monday, February 16

La Louviere 0
Germinal Beerschot 0 Att: 3,390

Friday, February 20

Mons 0
Genk 1 (Haroun 88) Att: 4,500

Saturday, February 21

Charleroi 2 (Ikpeba 13, Chabaud 42)
Gent 0 Att: 6,855

Club Brugge 2 (Verheyen 39, Lange 89)
St Truiden 1 (Verjans 24) Att: 23,982

Lokeren 3 (De Beule 27, 70, Renatinho 42)
Lierse 0 Att: 5,275

Mouscron 2 (Dugardein 77, Pieroni 87)
La Louviere 1 (Assou-Ekotto 39) Att: 8,200

Standard 7 (Walasiak 9, 50, Mpenza pen 19, 70, Bangoura 40, 56, Curbelo 62)
Cercle Brugge 0 Att: 13,500

Sunday, February 22

Germinal Beerschot 1 (Milson 33)
Royal Antwerp 0 Att: 11,000

Heusden-Zolder 1 (De Camargo 74)
Beveren 4 (Sanogo 25, Lolo 34, Romaric 60, 90) Att: 5,331

Westerlo 0
Anderlecht 0 Att: 10,000

Friday, February 27

La Louviere 3 (Onyewu 15, Mamouni pen 31, 57)
Standard 2 (Mpenza 14, Curbello 87)

Saturday, February 28

Genk 2 (De Roeck og 8, Daerden 69)
Lierse 0 Att: 23,627

Gent 1 (Cavens 89)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Cooreman 65) Att: 8,300

St Truiden 1 (Van Imschoot 66)
Charleroi 2 (Olufade 32, 72) Att: 7,300

Sunday, February 29

Beveren 1 (Romaric 13)
Club Brugge 3 (Mendoza 53, Verheyen 76, Ne og 85) Att: 8,000

Cercle Brugge 0
Mons 1 (Wamberto 35) Att: 3,800

Westerlo 7 (Wagemakers 4, 54, Dosunmu 19, Haraldsen 43, Ba 52, Delen 63, Brogno 88)
Lokeren 3 (Renatinho 26, Geraerts 39, Bance 84) Att: 4,000

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	23	20	2	1	57	18	62
Standard	24	13	7	4	50	23	46
Club Brugge	24	14	4	6	51	25	46
Mouscron	23	11	9	3	46	29	42
Genk	24	12	6	6	45	30	42
Westerlo	24	11	8	5	37	28	41
Germinal B	24	8	9	7	22	25	33
St Truiden	24	8	7	9	28	35	31
La Louviere	24	6	11	7	31	34	29
Beveren	24	9	2	13	34	41	29
Gent	24	6	10	8	23	25	28
Mons	24	5	9	10	23	32	24
Cercle Brugge	24	5	9	10	20	42	24
Lierse	24	4	11	9	22	32	23
Charleroi	24	5	7	12	23	32	22
Lokeren	24	5	7	12	29	42	22
Heusden-Zolder	23	4	6	13	22	41	18
Royal Antwerp	23	4	4	15	17	46	16

LEADING GOALSCORERS

17 Luigi Pieroni (Mouscron)
14 Andres Mendoza (Club Brugge)
12 Emile Mpenza (Standard)
12 Cedric Roussel (Genk)

BULGARIA

Feb 13: Naftex 3 CSKA 3.
Feb 14: Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1 Makedonska 0; Cherno More 3 Marek 0; Belasitsa 3 Spartak Varna 0; Rodopa 2 Botev 1; Lokomotiv Sofia 1 Vidima-Rakovski 1; Levski 3 Chernomorets 0; Lovech 1 Slavia 0.
Feb 20: Vidima-Rakovski 0 Levski 3.
Feb 21: Lokomotiv Sofia 0 Lovech 1; Chernomorets 2 Rodopa 1; Botev 1 Belasitsa 0; Spartak Varna 1 Cherno More 2; Marek 0 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 3; Makedonska 2 Naftex 1; CSKA 2 Slavia 1.
Feb 28: Slavia 1 Makedonska 0; Naftex 5 Marek 0; Cherno More 3 Botev 1; Belasitsa 1 Chernomorets 0; Rodopa 1 Vidima-Rakovski 1; Lovech 1 CSKA 0.
Feb 29: Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1 Spartak Varna 0.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lok Plovdiv	18	15	1	2	40	12	46
Lovech	18	12	5	1	25	9	41
Levski	17	12	4	1	32	9	40
CSKA	18	12	3	3	38	17	39
Slavia	18	12	1	5	36	18	37
Naftex	18	6	5	7	33	23	23
Cherno More	18	6	5	7	25	30	23
Marek	18	7	0	11	21	37	21
Lok Sofia	17	4	7	6	23	26	19
Belasitsa	18	6	1	11	19	33	19
Spartak Varna	18	5	3	10	20	27	18
Vidima-Rakovski	18	4	6	8	19	29	18
Rodopa	18	5	3	10	17	30	18
Chernomorets	18	4	5	9	18	29	17
Makedonska	18	4	1	13	18	33	13
Botev	18	3	2	13	20	42	11

CROATIA

Feb 21: Zadar 1 Osijek 1; Rijeka 2 Slaven 0; Marsonia 0 Hajduk 1; Dinamo 1 Zagreb 1; Varteks 1 Kamen Ingrad 0; Cibalia 1 Inter 0.
Feb 28: Cibalia 1 Zadar 1; Kamen Ingrad 0 Dinamo 1; Zagreb 2 Marsonia 3; Hajduk 4 Rijeka 0; Slaven 3 Osijek 3; Inter 0 Varteks 0.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hajduk	19	15	1	3	38	14	46
Dinamo	19	12	5	2	42	16	41
Kamen Ingrad	19	7	4	8	28	23	25
Rijeka	19	6	7	6	24	24	25
Osijek	19	7	4	8	31	35	25
Zadar	19	6	7	6	32	38	25
Inter	19	5	8	6	20	21	23
Slaven	19	5	8	6	20	23	23
Varteks	19	5	8	6	17	20	23
Zagreb	19	3	9	7	21	30	18
Cibalia	19	4	5	10	22	32	17
Marsonia	19	4	4	11	23	42	16

CZECH REPUBLIC

Feb 14: Slavia 2 Chmel Blsany 0; Liberec 0 Ostrava 2; Synot 0 Brno 0; Opava 3 Sparta 4.
Feb 15: Zizkov 0 Plzen 0; Pribram 1 Teplice 0; Ceske Budejovice 3 Zlin 0.
Feb 16: Olomouc 0 Jablonec 0.
Feb 21: Sparta 0 Pribram 0; Zlin 1 Slavia 2; Teplice 0 Olomouc 0.
Feb 22: Jablonec 2 Opava 0; Brno 0 Ceske Budejovice 1; Plzen 0 Liberec 0; Chmel Blsany 1 Zizkov 0.
Feb 28: Slavia 3 Plzen 0; Synot 1 Jablonec 0; Ceske Budejovice 2 Sparta 2.
Feb 29: Olomouc 1 Pribram 0; Chmel Blsany 2 Ostrava 1; Zizkov 2 Brno 0.
Mar 1: Liberec 3 Zlin 0.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ostrava	18	11	6	1	36	14	39
Slavia	19	11	3	5	27	11	36
Sparta	19	9	7	3	33	17	34
Olomouc	19	9	5	5	30	16	32
Liberec	19	8	6	5	21	14	30
Synot	18	8	5	5	25	21	29
Ceske Budejovice	19	8	5	6	25	22	29
Zlin	19	8	3	8	20	24	27
Pribram	19	6	4	9	22	21	22
Teplice	18	5	7	6	17	19	22
Brno	19	5	7	7	19	25	22
Jablonec	19	4	9	6	16	23	21
Opava	18	6	2	10	22	36	20
Zizkov	19	4	4	11	10	23	16
Plzen	19	3	6	10	13	30	15
Chmel Blsany	19	4	3	12	19	39	15

ENGLAND

Saturday, February 7

Aston Villa 2 (Angel pen 45, Johnsen 59)
Leeds 0 Att: 39,171

Bolton 2 (Hunt 11, Djorkaeff 58)
Liverpool 2 (Hyypia 51, Gerrard 69) Att: 27,552

Everton 3 (Unsworth 49, O'Shea og 65, Kilbane 75)
Manchester Utd 4 (Saha 9, 29, Van Nistelrooy 24, 89) Att: 40,190

Middlesbrough 0
Blackburn 1 (Stead 39) Att: 28,307

Newcastle 3 (Ameobi 30, Taggart og 37, Jenas 59)
Leicester 0 Att: 52,125

Southampton 0
Fulham 0 Att: 31,820

Tottenham 4 (Defoe 13, Keane 42, 79, Poyet 89)
Portsmouth 3 (Berkovic 39, Lua Lua 73, Mornar 84) Att: 36,107

Wolverhampton 1 (Ganea 26)
Arsenal 3 (Bergkamp 9, Henry 58, Toure 63) Att: 29,392

Sunday, February 8

Chelsea 1 (Hasselbaink pen 28)
Charlton 0 Att: 41,255

Manchester City 0
Birmingham 0 Att: 46,967

Tuesday, February 10

Arsenal 2 (Henry 31, 90)
Southampton 0 Att: 38,007

Leeds 4 (Smith 14, Matteo 41, Milner 61, Viduka 90)
Wolverhampton 1 (Ganea 21) Att: 36,867

Leicester 1 (Ferdinand 16)
Bolton 1 (Walker og 33) Att: 26,674

Wednesday, February 11

Birmingham 3 (Johnson 8, Lazaridis 39, Forssell 49)
Everton 0 Att: 29,004

Blackburn 1 (Stead 85)
Newcastle 1 (Bellamy 52) Att: 23,459

Charlton 2 (Stuart 51, Perry 81)
Tottenham 4 (Davies 10, Defoe 43, King 46, Jackson 85) Att: 26,660

Fulham 1 (Boa Morte 1)
Aston Villa 2 (Angel 13, Vassell 32) Att: 16,153

Liverpool 2 (Owen 3, Gerrard 51)
Manchester City 1 (Wright-Phillips 50) Att: 43,257

Manchester Utd 2 (Van Nistelrooy 45, Giggs 63)
Middlesbrough 3 (Juninho 34, 38, Job 80) Att: 67,346

Portsmouth 0
Chelsea 2 (Parker 17, Crespo 79) Att: 20,140

Saturday, February 21

Bolton 1 (Nolan 22)
Manchester City 3 (Fowler 27, 31, Charlton og 50) Att: 27,031

Charlton 3 (Cole 10, Euell 36, Jensen 90)
Blackburn 2 (Cole 74, Friedel 89) Att: 26,332

Chelsea 1 (Gudjohnsen 1)
Arsenal 2 (Vieira 15, Edu 21) Att: 41,847

Manchester Utd 1 (Scholes 64)
Leeds 1 (Smith 67) Att: 67,744

Newcastle 2 (Bellamy 63, Shearer pen 83)
Middlesbrough 1 (Zenden 33) Att: 52,156

Southampton 3 (Phillips 58, Beattie pen 82, Fernandes 90)
Everton 3 (Rooney 7, 78, Ferguson 32) Att: 31,875

Wolverhampton 2 (Ince 20, Cort 51)
Fulham 1 (Malbranque 84) Att: 28,424

Sunday, February 22

Aston Villa 2 (Vassell 21, Hitzlsperger 47)
Birmingham 2 (Forssell 60, John 90) Att: 40,061

Tottenham 4 (Brown 7, Defoe 13, 89, Keane 28)
Leicester 4 (Doherty og 9, Ferdinand 51, Thatcher 72, Bent 77) Att: 35,218

Saturday, February 28

Arsenal 2 (Pires 2, Henry 4)
Charlton 1 (Jensen 59) Att: 38,137

Blackburn 1 (Cole 52)
Southampton 1 (Phillips 5) Att: 21,970

Everton 2 (Radzinski 78, Gravesen 84)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 39,353

Fulham 1 (Boa Morte 64)
Manchester Utd 1 (Saha 14) Att: 18,306

Leicester 0
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 31,768

ESM
EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES
GOLDEN SHOE

ESM GOLDEN SHOE STANDINGS AT 29.02.04

pos	name	team	goals	factor	pts
1	Ara Hakopyan	Banants (Arm)	45	1	45
2	Ronaldo	Real Madrid (Spa)	22	2	44
3	Ailton	Werder Bremen (Ger)	20	2	40
	Thierry Henry	Arsenal (Eng)	20	2	40
5	Tor Henning Hamre	Flora Tallinn (Est)	39	1	39
6	Djibril Cisse	Auxerre (Fra)	18	2	36
	Viktors Dobrecovs	Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat)	36	1	36
	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	Manchester Utd (Eng)	18	2	36

For the latest standings, updated weekly, visit www.worldsoccer.com

Manchester City 0
Chelsea 1 (Gudjohnsen 82) Att: 47,304

Sunday, February 29

Leeds 2 (Bakke 29, Viduka 34)
Liverpool 2 (Kewell 21, Baros 42) Att: 39,932

Portsmouth 1 (Lua Lua 88)
Newcastle 1 (Bellamy 34) Att: 20,140

Wednesday, March 3

Birmingham 3 (Taylor 23, Savage 57, Forssell 79)
Middlesbrough 1 (Nemeth 75) Att: 29,369

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	27	20	7	0	53	18	67
Chelsea	27	18	4	5	48	21	58
Man Utd	27	18	4	5	51	25	58
Newcastle	27	10	12	5	38	28	42
Charlton	27	11	7	9	38	34	40
Liverpool	26	10	9	7	38	29	39
Birmingham	26	10	9	7	28	29	39
Aston Villa	27	10	7	10	32	32	37
Fulham	27	10	6	11	39	38	36
Tottenham	26	10	4	12	39	42	34
Bolton	26	8	10	8	32	40	34
Southampton	27	8	9	10	27	27	33
Middlesbrough	26	8	7	11	28	34	31
Everton	27	7	8	12	33	39	29
Blackburn	27	7	7	13	39	44	28
Man City	27	6	9	12	36	39	27
Portsmouth	26	6	6	14	29	40	24
Wolverhampton	27	5	9	13	24	52	24
Leicester	27	4	11	12	37	51	23
Leeds	27	5	7	15	26	53	22

LEADING GOALSCORERS
20 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
18 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)
17 Louis Saha (Fulham/Manchester Utd)
17 Alan Shearer (Newcastle)

FA CUP – 4th rnd (last 32)

Feb 11: Telford 0 Millwall 2.

5th rnd (last 16)

Feb 14: Fulham 0 West Ham 0; Manchester Utd 4 Manchester City 2; Millwall 1 Burnley 0; Sunderland 1 Birmingham 1; Tranmere 2 Swansea 1.
Feb 15: Arsenal 2 Chelsea 1; Liverpool 1 Portsmouth 1; Sheffield Utd 1 Colchester 0.

5th rnd replays
Feb 22: Portsmouth 1 Liverpool 0.
Feb 24: West Ham 0 Fulham 3.
Feb 25: Birmingham 0 Sunderland 2 (aet).

LEAGUE CUP – Final

Feb 29 - Millennium stadium, Cardiff
Bolton 1 (Davies 21)
Middlesbrough 2 (Job 2, Zenden pen 7)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 72,634. **Ref:** Riley

FRANCE

Friday, February 6

Bordeaux 2 (Francia 19, Riera 23)
Nantes 0 Att: 23,000

Saturday, February 7

Bastia 1 (Ogbeche 28)
Toulouse 0 Att: 5,300

Lille 2 (Dernis 45, Moussilou 54)
Sochaux 0 Att: 14,500

Lyon 0
Guingamp 1 (Saveljic 90) Att: 34,500

Marseille 2 (Hossam 11, Marlet 90)
Ajaccio 1 (Seck 73) Att: 47,000

Metz 0
Monaco 2 (Plasil 40, Givet 52) Att: 19,000

Nice 4 (Meslin 8, Pamarot 16, Everson 31, Diakite 76)
Lens 0 Att: 13,000

Paris SG 6 (Ljuboja 7, 55, Pauleta 20, 49, Boskovic 76, Reinaldo 78)
Montpellier 1 (Dzodic 53) Att: 38,952

Rennes 0
Auxerre 2 (Mexes 16, Kalou 54) Att: 18,500

Strasbourg 3 (Le Pen 51, 81, Chapuis 72)
Le Mans 0 Att: 12,327

Saturday, February 14

Ajaccio 0
Strasbourg 0 Att: 2,832

Guingamp 1 (Shereni 16)
Bastia 0 Att: 13,266

Le Mans 0
Marseille 0 Att: 16,312

Lens 2 (Thomert 25, Coridon 84)
Rennes 1 (Piquionne 81) Att: 31,387

Monaco 0
Lille 1 (Moussilou 78) Att: 8,181

Montpellier 0
Metz 1 (Leca 5) Att: 8,159

Nantes 3 (Pujol 6, Moldovan 29, pen 83)
Nice 1 (Meslin 38) Att: 27,862

Sochaux 1 (Oruma 90)
Bordeaux 1 (Francia 85) Att: 15,276

Toulouse 0
Paris SG 1 (Ljuboja 28) Att: 24,218

Sunday, February 15

Auxerre 1 (Boumsong 75)
Lyon 2 (Violeau og 8, Luyindula 69) Att: 17,000

Friday, February 20

Monaco 4 (Adebayor 48, 56, 76, Morientes 49)
Montpellier 0 Att: 4,000

Saturday, February 21

Bastia 0
Auxerre 0 Att: 3,000

Bordeaux 0
Lens 0 Att: 23,106

Lille 1 (Acimovic pen 74)
Nice 2 (Pamarot 33, Echouafni 84) Att: 15,565

Lyon 2 (Malouda 22, Govou 61)
Le Mans 0 Att: 35,811

Metz 0
Toulouse 2 (Faure 9, Fernandao 73) Att: 13,188

Paris SG 2 (M'Bami 23, Ljuboja 82)
Guingamp 0 Att: 41,447

Rennes 4 (Frei 52, Vairelles 65, Kallstrom 74, 87)
Ajaccio 1 (Diomede pen 16) Att: 15,646

Strasbourg 0
Sochaux 2 (Frau 6, Isabey 24) Att: 18,019

Sunday, February 22

Marseille 1 (Drogba 29)
Nantes 1 (Moldovan 40) Att: 50,000

Saturday, February 28

Le Mans 2 (Peyrelade 41, 77)
Rennes 2 (Piquionne 13, Diatta 90) Att: 11,971

Lens 1 (Eloi 70)
Lyon 1 (Dhorasoo 34) Att: 33,230

Montpellier 0
Lille 2 (Moussilou 13, 70) Att: 8,346

Nantes 1 (Da Rocha 24)
Strasbourg 1 (Yepes og 90) Att: 31,000

Toulouse 1 (Didot 47)
Monaco 1 (Givet 72) Att: 32,800

Sunday, February 29

Ajaccio 1 (Bagayoko 17)
Bordeaux 0 Att: 2,500

Auxerre 1 (Cisse 45)
Paris SG 1 (Cana 80) Att: 18,000

Nice 0
Marseille 0 Att: 15,690

Sochaux 2 (Lonfat 35, Frau 56)
Bastia 1 (Maurice pen 51) Att: 15,930

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	26	16	7	3	44	18	55
Lyon	26	15	6	5	44	20	51
Paris SG	26	14	8	4	37	19	50
Sochaux	26	14	6	6	39	28	48
Auxerre	26	14	4	8	43	21	46
Marseille	26	13	4	9	33	26	43
Nantes	26	11	6	9	29	23	39
Nice	26	9	12	5	27	22	39
Bordeaux	26	10	7	9	25	27	37
Lens	26	11	4	11	23	38	37
Lille	26	9	7	10	28	28	34
Rennes	26	8	9	9	33	28	33
Strasbourg	26	8	7	11	37	37	31
Bastia	26	7	8	11	26	35	29
Ajaccio	26	7	6	13	23	37	27
Metz	25	6	6	13	17	27	24
Guingamp	25	7	3	15	21	38	24
Toulouse	26	5	7	14	19	34	22
Montpellier	26	6	4	16	29	51	22
Le Mans	26	4	9	13	20	40	21

LEADING GOALSCORERS
18 Djibril Cisse (Auxerre)
15 Pierre-Alain Frau (Sochaux)
14 Didier Drogba (Marseille)
12 Vladimir Manchev (Lille)

FRENCH CUP – last 16

Feb 10: Bayonne 0 Paris SG 2; Brive 1 Auxerre 0.
Feb 11: Amiens 1 Caen 0; Chateauroux 2 Creteil 0; Dijon 1 Reims 1 (aet; Dijon 4-2 on pens); Monaco 4 Lyon 1; Nantes 4 Brest 0; Toulouse 1 Rennes 1 (aet; Rennes 7-6 on pens).

GERMANY

Saturday, February 7

Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Neuville 61)
Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Hertzsch 20, Amanatidis 77) Att: 22,500

Hamburg 1 (Romeo 85)
Bochum 1 (Colding 70) Att: 37,667

Hansa Rostock 4 (Di Salvo 8, Arvidsson 76, Plassnegger 80, Tjikuzu 90)
Freiburg 1 (Sanou 64) Att: 14,000

Kaiserslautern 1 (Lokvenc 23)
Koln 0 Att: 37,529

Monchengladbach 1 (Sverkos 51)
Werder Bremen 2 (Klasnic 54, Baumann 90) Att: 28,650

Schalke 0
1860 Munich 0 Att: 61,266

Wolfsburg 2 (Petrov pen 36, Fernando Baiano 88)
Borussia Dortmund 4 (Jensen 42, Koller 45, Frings 54, Ricken 78) Att: 25,286

Sunday, February 8

Bayern Munich 3 (Ballack 10, Ze Roberto 66, Makaay 78)
Hannover 1 (Svitlica 82) Att: 30,000

Hertha 1 (Bobic 88)
Stuttgart 0 Att: 28,000

Saturday, February 14

Bochum 1 (Madsen 8)
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 32,645

Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Chris 39)
Hansa Rostock 1 (Arvidsson 82) Att: 21,000

Freiburg 2 (Hartmann og 76, Tskitishvili pen 87)
Hertha 3 (Friedrich 24, Neuendorf 44, Reina 63) Att: 22,950

Hamburg 2 (Barbarez 18, Rahn 88)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 41,017

Hannover 2 (Mathis 40, Konstantinidis 48)
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Berbatov 65, Franca 71) Att: 20,993

Koln 0
Schalke 2 (Van Kerckhoven 26, Delura 81) Att: 50,600

Stuttgart 1 (Szabics 6)
Monchengladbach 1 (Sverkos 84) Att: 33,500

Sunday, February 15

1860 Munich 0
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Ewerthon pen 40, 60) Att: 25,000

Werder Bremen 1 (Ailton pen 90)
Kaiserslautern 0 Att: 34,000

Saturday, February 21

Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Berbatov 60)
Bochum 3 (Meichelbeck 52, Wosz 54, Diabang 73) Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 1 (Demichelis 87)
Hamburg 0 Att: 36,000

Hansa Rostock 3 (Arvidsson 12, Max 33, 39)
Hannover 1 (Mathis 38) Att: 16,000

Kaiserslautern 1 (Dominguez 4)
Stuttgart 0 Att: 41,200

Monchengladbach 2 (Maric pen 57, Kolkka 59)
Freiburg 2 (Cairo 19, Berner 50) Att: 28,400

Schalke 0
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 61,266

Wolfsburg 3 (Biliskov 9, D'Alessandro 19, Klimowicz 62)
1860 Munich 1 (Weissenberger 21) Att: 13,821

Sunday, February 22

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Ewerthon 26)
Koln 0 Att: 80,500

Hertha 1 (Rafael 62)
Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Cha 18, Amanatidis 66) Att: 35,000

Saturday, February 28

Bayern Munich 2 (Makaay 11, Schweinsteiger 76)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 32,000

Bochum 0
Hansa Rostock 0 Att: 25,110

Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Skela 15, Amanatidis 17, Schur 55)
Monchengladbach 1 (Van Lent 74) Att: 32,200

Hamburg 3 (Hoogma 10, Mahdavikia pen 18, Romeo 35)
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Schneider 39) Att: 43,023

Koln 1 (Voronin 50)
1860 Munich 3 (Schroth 14, 39, Lauth pen 36) Att: 38,000

Stuttgart 0
Schalke 0 Att: 43,000

Werder Bremen 2 (Ismael 56, Ailton 85)
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 43,000

Sunday, February 29

Freiburg 1 (Tskitishvili pen 82)
Kaiserslautern 0 Att: 24,500

Hannover 1 (Mathis 67)
Hertha 3 (Marcelinho 41, 81, Reina 79) Att: 21,755

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Werder Bremen	22	16	4	2	54	21	52
Bayern Munich	22	13	6	3	47	22	45
Stuttgart	22	11	7	4	27	10	40
Bochum	22	10	7	5	36	24	37
B Leverkusen	22	10	6	6	39	28	36
B Dortmund	22	10	4	8	36	30	34
Schalke	22	8	9	5	26	23	33
Hamburg	22	8	6	8	31	35	30
Wolfsburg	22	9	1	12	40	42	28
Freiburg	22	8	4	10	31	46	28
Hansa Rostock	22	7	6	9	32	32	27
1860 Munich	22	7	5	10	24	33	26
Hannover	22	6	6	10	38	50	24
Eintracht F'furt	22	6	5	11	25	33	23
Hertha	22	5	7	10	23	42	22
M'gladbach	22	5	6	11	23	33	21
Kaiserslautern*	22	7	3	12	23	35	21
Koln	22	4	4	14	17	33	16

**3pts deducted for failing to supply accurate information when re-applying for professional licence*

LEADING GOALSCORERS

20 Ailton (Werder Bremen)
14 Martin Max (Hansa Rostock)
13 Roy Makaay (Bayern Munich)
11 Vahid Hashemian (Bochum)

GREECE

Feb 7: AEK 0 Panionios 1; OFI 3 Aris 0.
Feb 8: Iraklis 2 Aigaleo 1; PAOK 3 Paniliakos 0; Olympiakos 4 Xanthi 1; Kallithea 2 Halkidona 3; Akratitos 1 Proodeftiki 0; Ionikos 1 Panathinaikos 2.
Feb 21: Aris 0 Kallithea 1; Xanthi 0 PAOK 0.
Feb 22: Aigaleo 3 Proodeftiki 0; Panathinaikos 3 Iraklis 0; Paniliakos 0 Akratitos 3; Panionios 0 Ionikos 2; Halkidona 2 AEK 0; OFI 0 Olympiakos 1.
Feb 28: Iraklis 0 Panionios 3; AEK 1 Aris 0; Kallithea 1 Olympiakos 2.
Feb 29: Panathinaikos 2 Aigaleo 0; Proodeftiki 2 Paniliakos 0; Akratitos 1 Xanthi 3; Ionikos 0 Halkidona 1; PAOK 2 OFI 0.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	22	18	2	2	54	14	56
Panathinaikos	22	17	4	1	44	13	55
PAOK	22	14	5	3	37	17	47
Aigaleo	22	11	6	5	27	17	39
AEK	22	11	5	6	41	22	38
Halkidona	22	11	5	6	33	26	38
Panionios	22	8	9	5	29	21	33
Iraklis	22	9	5	8	28	31	32
Xanthi	22	7	5	10	22	30	26
OFI	22	6	5	11	22	35	23
Ionikos	22	6	4	12	24	31	22
Aris	22	5	4	13	17	31	19
Kallithea	22	2	9	11	24	35	15
Paniliakos	22	3	6	13	24	43	15
Akratitos	22	3	5	14	22	57	14
Proodeftiki	22	2	7	13	13	38	13

HOLLAND

Friday, February 6

RBC 1 (Daelemans 27)
RKC 3 (Cornelisse 4, Hoogendorp 25, Boutahar 83) Att: 5,000

Saturday, February 7

AZ 3 (Van Galen 6, Huysegems 14, El Khattabi 80)
Volendam 0 Att: 8,800

Heerenveen 3 (Selakovic 15, Knopper 38, Sibon 41)
NAC 4 (Vos 28, pen 83, Diba 47, Feher 73) Att: 14,300

Twente 2 (N'Kufo 63, Gakhokidze 87)
Zwolle 0 Att: 13,100

Sunday, February 8

Ajax 2 (Sneijder 51, Mitea 61)
PSV 1 (Vennegoor of Hesselink 42) Att: 50,406

Groningen 2 (Smit 59, De Witte 90)
NEC 0 Att: 11,124

Vitesse 0
Feyenoord 0 Att: 18,750

Willem II 1 (Hadouir 50)
Den Haag 0 Att: 12,800

Wednesday, February 11

Den Haag 3 (Simons 53, pen 90, Stroeve 57)
Groningen 1 (Van Gessel 25) Att: 5,000

Feyenoord 0
AZ 3 (Perez 23, El Khattabi 47, Landzaat pen 67) Att: 41,500

RBC 1 (Luijten 83)
Roda JC 4 (Hesp og 43, Kone 69, Van Dessel 86, Vicelich 89) Att: 5,000

RKC 0
Heerenveen 0 Att: 5,300

Utrecht 2 (Tanghe 38, De Groot 90)
Willem II 2 (Victoria 37, Denneboom 79) Att: 17,128

Saturday, February 14

Heerenveen 1 (Seip 16)
Willem II 1 (Caluwe 90) Att: 14,300

NAC 0
Roda JC 0 Att: 11,580

PSV 1 (Kezman 90)
Twente 0 Att: 31,000

Vitesse 1 (Rink pen 80)
RBC 2 (De Graaf 45, Hesp 66) Att: 19,830

Sunday, February 15

Den Haag 2 (Castelen 19, Van der Gun 83)
Feyenoord 2 (Van Persie 37, Buffel 45) Att: 8,830

NEC 4 (Niedzielan 13, 71, Simr 33, Van der Doelen 63)
Utrecht 0 Att: 12,500

RKC 2 (Boulahrouz 20, Molhoek 30)
Zwolle 0 Att: 5,500

Volendam 0
Ajax 2 (Anastasiou 12, Galasek pen 87) Att: 6,199

Friday, February 20

Roda JC 1 (Cristiano 60)
Volendam 0 Att: 12,387

Saturday, February 21

AZ 2 (Van Galen 2, Buskermolen 52)
RBC 1 (De Graaf 54) Att: 7,357

Heerenveen 3 (Vayrynen 45, Knopper 77, Hansson 87)
PSV 2 (Lucius 45, Bouma 74) Att: 15,000

Vitesse 1 (Rink 51)
Groningen 2 (Krstev 48, Van Gessel 90) Att: 19,100

Zwolle 2 (Takak 73, 79)
NEC 1 (Van der Doelen 28) Att: 5,500

Sunday, February 22

Ajax 1 (Escude 12)
Twente 0 Att: 48,979

Utrecht 1 (Van de Haar 11)
NAC 2 (Vos 64, Boukhari 82) Att: 18,270

Wednesday, February 25

Den Haag 1 (Van der Gun 19)
Roda JC 0 Att: 7,381

Heerenveen 4 (Vayrynen 44, 74, Knopper 59, Hakansson 83)
Ajax 1 (Hansson og 86) Att: 15,300

NAC 1 (Feher 34)
Groningen 1 (De Witte 44) Att: 10,340

Friday, February 27

Zwolle 1 (Van der Haar pen 88)
Vitesse 1 (Knol 68) Att: 6,600

Saturday, February 28

NEC 1 (Hersi 13)
Heerenveen 2 (Berg Hestad 65, Vayrynen 80) Att: 12,500

RBC 1 (De Graaf 20)
NAC 1 (Diba 53) Att: 5,000

Twente 4 (Cziommer 11, 55, Gakhokidze pen 32, Ramzi 43)
AZ 1 (Huysegems 22) Att: 13,200

Sunday, February 29

Groningen 1 (Vrede 82)
RKC 2 (Boutahar 67, Cornelisse 77) Att: 11,748

PSV 1 (Vennegoor of Hesselink 35)
Roda JC 2 (Kone 12, Cristiano 18) Att: 32,500

Utrecht 1 (Tanghe 76)
Ajax 0 Att: 18,500

Volendam 0
Den Haag 2 (Van der Gun 50, Stroeve 87) Att: 5,202

Willem II 0
Feyenoord 3 (Lurling 60, Song 70, Smolarek 82) Att: 13,500

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	23	18	1	4	52	23	55
PSV	23	15	4	4	59	21	49
AZ	23	13	3	7	44	26	42
Feyenoord	23	12	6	5	43	31	42
Heerenveen	23	12	4	7	34	28	40
Roda JC	23	10	7	6	39	26	37
Twente	23	11	2	10	42	36	35
Willem II	23	9	7	7	33	34	34
NAC	23	8	7	8	37	34	31
RBC	23	8	7	8	26	29	31
RKC	23	8	6	9	32	28	30
Utrecht	23	8	6	9	28	31	30
Groningen	23	7	6	10	29	35	27
NEC	23	8	1	14	28	37	25
Den Haag	23	6	5	12	21	43	23
Vitesse	23	2	10	11	26	39	16
Volendam	23	4	4	15	20	59	16
Zwolle	23	2	6	15	14	47	12

LEADING GOALSCORERS

16 Mateja Kezman (PSV)
14 Ali El Khattabi (AZ)
11 Blaise N'Kufo (Twente)
10 Dirk Kuijt (Feyenoord)

ITALY

Saturday, February 7

Chievo 2 (Luciano 45, D'Anna pen 88)
Lecce 3 (Barzagli og 17, Chevanton 21, Cassetti 57) Att: 10,137

Udinese 1 (Jankulovski 45)
Bologna 3 (Locatelli 22, Nakata 47, Colucci 89) Att: 14,966

Sunday, February 8

Empoli 1 (Rocchi 69)
Siena 0 Att: 7,149

Milan 2 (Rui Costa 74, Pirlo pen 78)
Perugia 1 (Fresi pen 84) Att: 54,229

Modena 2 (Marazzina 37, Milanetto 60)
Ancona 1 (Bucchi 6) Att: 15,043

Parma 0
Lazio 3 (Claudio Lopez pen 37, 52, Corradi 61) Att: 14,215

Reggina 0
Brescia 0 Att: 19,783

Roma 4 (Dacourt 13, Totti pen 53, Cassano 70, 85)
Juventus 0 Att: 73,325

Sampdoria 2 (Cipriani 56, Doni pen 85)
Inter 2 (Vieri 32, 78) Att: 34,676

Saturday, February 14

Lazio 3 (Fernando Couto 5, Zauri 45, Stam 71)
Empoli 0 Att: 45,509

Perugia 0
Chievo 2 (Barzagli 67, Cossato 90) Att: 5,829

Sunday, February 15

Ancona 0
Roma 0 Att: 20,850

Bologna 1 (Locatelli 35)
Modena 1 (Amoruso 64) Att: 24,474

Brescia 1 (Caracciolo 5)
Sampdoria 1 (Doni 56) Att: 14,577

Inter 1 (Cruz 71)
Udinese 2 (Pinzi 53, Fava 66) Att: 51,973

Juventus 1 (Maresca 50)
Reggina 0 Att: 30,116

Lecce 1 (Chevanton 19)
Milan 1 (Shevchenko 53) Att: 31,427

Siena 1 (Chiesa 43)
Parma 2 (Gilardino 58, Bresciano 90) Att: 9,941

Saturday, February 21

Milan 3 (Tomasson 56, Kaka 57, Seedorf 85)
Inter 2 (Stankovic 15, C Zanetti 40) Att: 78,334

Sampdoria 1 (Floro Flores 82)
Parma 2 (Gilardino 59, Bresciano 74) Att: 23,436

Sunday, February 22

Bologna 0
Juventus 1 (Iuliano 56) Att: 33,782

Brescia 1 (Baggio 90)
Lecce 2 (Chevanton 12, Cassetti 88) Att: 10,474

Chievo 0
Lazio 0 Att: 11,706

Modena 1 (Amoruso 39)
Empoli 1 (Rocchi 50) Att: 13,818

Reggina 1 (Cozza pen 53)
Perugia 2 (Ze Maria 20, Hubner 90) Att: 18,875

Roma 6 (Cassano 20, 25, 71, Mancini 31, Delvecchio 82, Totti 87)
Siena 0 Att: 49,579

Udinese 3 (Fava 57, Jankulovski 83, Pizarro 86)
Ancona 0 Att: 14,704

Saturday, February 28

Empoli 2 (Busce 22, Cribari 41)
Udinese 0 Att: 3,774

Siena 0
Reggina 0 Att: 9,426

Sunday, February 29

Inter 1 (Stankovic 48)
Brescia 3 (Caracciolo 67, 81, Del Nero 73) Att: 52,652

Juventus 3 (Camoranesi 7, Miccoli 41, Del Piero 45)
Ancona 0 Att: 29,864

Lazio 0
Milan 1 (Ambrosini 75) Att: 54,632

Lecce 1 (Chevanton pen 22)
Modena 0 Att: 14,606

Parma 1 (Gilardino 29)
Roma 4 (Cassano 44, Emerson 51, Totti 69, Mancini 74) Att: 19,031

Perugia 4 (Ravanelli 31, Codrea 67, Ze Maria pen 74, Fresi pen 83)
Bologna 2 (Bellucci 61, 85) Att: 7,292

Sampdoria 1 (Diana 49)
Chievo 0 Att: 23,000

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	23	18	4	1	44	13	58
Roma	23	16	5	2	51	10	53
Juventus	23	16	4	3	47	25	52
Lazio	23	12	4	7	33	23	40
Parma	23	11	6	6	33	30	39
Inter	23	10	6	7	39	23	36
Udinese	23	10	6	7	28	25	36
Sampdoria	23	8	9	6	28	26	33
Chievo	23	8	5	10	25	27	29
Brescia	23	6	9	8	33	36	27
Bologna	23	6	7	10	25	33	25
Lecce	23	7	4	12	28	39	25
Modena	23	5	8	10	18	29	23
Siena	23	5	7	11	28	36	22
Reggina	23	4	10	9	19	33	22
Empoli	23	5	5	13	18	39	20
Perugia	23	2	11	10	29	42	17
Ancona	23	0	6	17	8	45	6

LEADING GOALSCORERS

17 Andrii Shevchenko (Milan)
14 Francesco Totti (Roma)
13 Ernesto Chevanton (Lecce)
12 David Trezeguet (Juventus)

ITALIAN CUP – semi-finals

2nd legs
Feb 11: Lazio 4 Milan 0 *Lazio 6-1 on agg.*
Feb 12: Inter 2 Juventus 2 *Agg 4-4. Juventus 5-4 on pens*

PORTUGAL

Friday, February 6

Gil Vicente 1 (Josiesley Ferreira 42)
Sporting Braga 0

Saturday, February 7

Nacional 3 (Gouveia 41, Adriano 49, Carlos Alvarez 87)
Sporting Lisbon 3 (Sa Pinto 38, Niculae 62, Lourenco 73)

FC Porto 2 (Maniche 18, Maciel 34)
Uniao Leiria 1 (Fredy 78)

Sunday, February 8

Academica 1 (Fabio Felicio pen 53)
Guimaraes 1 (Rafael 3)

Beira Mar 1 (Wijnhard 8)
Rio Ave 1 (Jaime 27)

Belenenses 0
Benfica 2 (Sokota 51, Joao Pereira 67)

Maritimo 2 (Alan 43, Rodrigao 61)
Pacos Ferreira 0

Moreirense 1 (Sergio Lomba 19)
Estrela Amadora 0

Monday, February 9

Boavista 2 (Luiz Claudio 90, Fary 90)
Alverca 1 (Amoreirinha 42)

Friday, February 13

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Rochemback 34)
Moreirense 0

Saturday, February 14

Academica 1 (Paulo Sergio 64)
Boavista 0

Sunday, February 15

Benfica 1 (Simao 50)
FC Porto 1 (Costinha 30)

Estrela Amadora 1 (Pedro Simoes 10)
Gil Vicente 1 (Mauro 48)

Pacos Ferreira 2 (Manduca 2, Fernando Gaucho 14)
Beira Mar 1 (Joao Paulo 73)

TEAM OF THE MONTH – FEBRUARY 2004

ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES

La Gazzetta dello Sport · don balon · kicker · SPORT-EXPRESS · FOOT · WORLD SOCCER · A BOLA · voetbal INTERNATIONAL · FANATIK · TIPS bladet

HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (POR)
Casillas (Real Madrid); Evseev (Lokomotiv Moscow), Ricardo Carvalho (Porto), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Figo (Real Madrid), Edu (Arsenal), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Zidane (Real Madrid); McCarthy (Porto), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Henry (Arsenal)

FANATIK (TUR)
Dida (Milan); Nesta (Milan), Puyol (Barcelona), Tomas (Fenerbahce), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Zidane (Real Madrid), Vieira (Arsenal), Cassano (Roma), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Ailton (Werder Bremen), Henry (Arsenal)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)
Casillas (Real Madrid); Ricardo Carvalho (Porto), Nesta (Milan), Lahm (Stuttgart); Seedorf (Milan), Zidane (Real Madrid), Pirlo (Milan), Robben (PSV), Figo (Real Madrid); Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Henry (Arsenal)

SPORT EXPRESS (RUS)
Friedel (Blackburn); Ismael (Werder Bremen), Samuel (Roma), Puyol (Barcelona); Totti (Roma), Xavi (Barcelona), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Seedorf (Milan); Henry (Arsenal), Ailton (Werder Bremen), Cassano (Roma)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (HOL)
Rost (Schalke); Paulo Ferreira (Porto), Ismael (Werder Bremen), Mexes (Auxerre); Seedorf (Milan), Zidane (Real Madrid), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Davids (Barcelona); Henry (Arsenal), Cassano (Roma), Saha (Manchester United)

DON BALON (SPA)
Casillas (Real Madrid); Campbell (Arsenal), Ismael (Werder Bremen), Nuno Valente (Porto); Micoud (Werder Bremen), Seedorf (Milan), Zidane (Real Madrid), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Henry (Arsenal), Cassano (Roma)

FOOT (BLG)
Van Duijnhoven (Bochum); Ismael (Werder Bremen), Campbell (Arsenal), Terry (Chelsea); Seedorf (Milan), Totti (Roma), Zidane (Real Madrid), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Saviola (Barcelona), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Henry (Arsenal)

KICKER (GER)
Van Duijnhoven (Bochum); Paulo Ferreira (Porto), Ismael (Werder Bremen), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Vieira (Arsenal), Essien (Lyon), Seedorf (Milan), Totti (Roma), Lampard (Chelsea); Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Frau (Sochaux)

TIPS-BLADET (DEN)
Casillas (Real Madrid); Puyol (Barcelona), Stam (Lazio), Campbell (Arsenal), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Totti (Roma), Edu (Arsenal), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Ailton (Werder Bremen), Morientes (Monaco), Cassano (Roma)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)
Canizares (Valencia); Lahm (Stuttgart), Terry (Chelsea), Krstajic (Werder Bremen); Edu (Arsenal), Okocha (Bolton), Davids (Barcelona), Totti (Roma); Saha (Manchester United), Luque (Deportivo La Coruna), Cassano (Roma)

Sporting Braga 0
Maritimo 0

Uniao Leiria 0
Nacional 1 (Adriano 57)

Monday, February 16

Guimaraes 0
Belenenses 1 (Hugo Henrique 73)

Rio Ave 1 (Van Es 22)
Alverca 2 (Rodolfo Lima 39, Alex Afonso 41)

Friday, February 20

Beira Mar 0
Sporting Braga 2 (Wender 63, Igor 77)

Saturday, February 21

Belenenses 0
Academica 5 (Tonel 13, Paulo Sergio 43, Joeano 76, Flavio Dias 89, Lucas 90)

FC Porto 3 (Maciel 30, Jankauskas 45, McCarthy pen 90)
Guimaraes 0

Sunday, February 22

Alverca 2 (Bruno Aguiar 9, Amoreirinha 34)
Pacos Ferreira 1 (Fernando Gaucho 3)

Gil Vicente 1 (Luis Loureiro pen 19)
Sporting Lisbon 1 (Carlos Martins 71)

Maritimo 1 (Eric Gaucho pen 54)
Estrela Amadora 0

Moreirense 0
Uniao Leiria 0

Nacional 3 (Adriano 10, 53, Gouveia 55)
Benfica 2 (Simao 30, Nuno Gomes 51)

Monday, February 23

Boavista 1 (Ricardo Sousa 21)
Rio Ave 1 (Jaime 87)

Friday, February 27

Guimaraes 2 (Vinicius 26, Guga 59)
Nacional 1 (Serginho Baiano 70)

Saturday, February 28

Belenenses 1 (Hugo Henrique 11)
Boavista 1 (Cafu 49)

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Beto 82)
Maritimo 0

Sunday, February 29

Benfica 1 (Fernando Aguiar 54)
Moreirense 1 (Demetrios 86)

Estrela Amadora 2 (Miran 13, 53)
Beira Mar 2 (Juninho Petrolina 36, 87)

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Puntas 78)
Rio Ave 2 (Evandro 2, 80)

Uniao Leiria 2 (Edson 89, Joao Paulo 90)
Gil Vicente 2 (Luis Loureiro pen 44, Gaspar 83)

Monday, March 1

Academica 0
FC Porto 1 (McCarthy 77)

Sporting Braga 0
Alverca 0

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	24	19	5	0	52	14	62
Sporting Lisbon	24	17	4	3	45	23	55
Benfica	24	14	6	4	46	24	48
Sporting Braga	24	11	6	7	24	26	39
Nacional	24	11	4	9	41	27	37
Maritimo	24	9	10	5	25	21	37
Boavista	24	9	9	6	23	19	36
Beira Mar	24	10	6	8	34	31	36
Rio Ave	24	8	9	7	28	23	33
Moreirense	24	7	8	9	19	26	29
Gil Vicente	24	6	10	8	33	30	28
Alverca	24	7	5	12	25	31	26
Uniao Leiria	24	6	7	11	27	37	25
Belenenses	24	5	9	10	27	43	24
Academica	24	6	4	14	22	29	22
Guimaraes	24	4	8	12	22	33	20
Pacos Ferreira	24	6	2	16	17	38	20
Estrela Amadora	24	3	4	17	17	52	13

LEADING GOALSCORER
15 Adriano (Nacional)

PORTUGUESE CUP – qtr-finals

Feb 11: Belenenses 2 Estoril 2 (aet; Belenenses 5-4 on pens); Benfica 2 Nacional 1; Naval 1° de Maio 2 Sporting Braga 3; Rio Ave 1 FC Porto 2.

SCOTLAND

Tuesday, February 10

Dundee Utd 0
Hibernian 0 Att: 6,389

Wednesday, February 11

Dunfermline 1 (Hunt 20)
Celtic 4 (Larsson 23, 43, Varga 26, Thompson 68) Att: 11,201

Hearts 1 (Pressley pen 81)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 11,236

Motherwell 5 (Lasley 15, Dair 18, 73, Clarkson 51, Burns 62)
Dundee 3 (Barrett 11, 28, Novo 58) Att: 4,247

Partick 5 (Grady 10, Britton 41, 73, McNamee og 68, Thomson 82)
Livingston 2 (Makel 85, McMenamin 90) Att: 3,011

Rangers 2 (Moore 23, Namouchi 76)
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 46,900

Saturday, February 14

Aberdeen 1 (Diamond 2)
Rangers 1 (F De Boer 87) Att: 15,815

Celtic 2 (Maloney 81, Sutton pen 83)
Dundee Utd 1 (Archibald 61) Att: 58,698

Dundee 0
Dunfermline 1 (Hunt 32) Att: 5,643

Kilmarnock 2 (Lilley 55, Boyd 58)
Partick 1 (Bonnes 52) Att: 5,818

Livingston 3 (McAllister 3, Lilley 29, Fernandez 45)
Motherwell 1 (Adams 90) Att: 3,492

Sunday, February 15

Hibernian 1 (Riordan 24)
Hearts 1 (Pressley pen 47) Att: 15,060

Saturday, February 21

Aberdeen 2 (McGuire 36, Booth 52)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 11,035

Dundee 1 (Milne 59)
Livingston 0 Att: 6,108

Hearts 3 (Hartley 16, Wilson og 65, McKenna 72)
Dundee Utd 1 (McIntyre 52) Att: 10,265

Motherwell 1 (Clarkson 15)
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 5,163

Rangers 3 (Arveladze pen 9, Mols 66, Thompson pen 69)
Hibernian 0 Att: 49,698

Sunday, February 22

Partick 1 (Britton 55)
Celtic 4 (Sutton 35, pen 52, Varga 38, 81) Att: 8,131

Tuesday, February 24

Livingston 2 (Makel 5, McMenamin 56)
Hearts 3 (De Vries 25, Kirk 47, McKenna 84) Att: 4,450

Motherwell 1 (Wright 84)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 5,220

Saturday, February 28

Dunfermline 0
Hearts 0 Att: 8,421

Hibernian 0
Aberdeen 1 (Morrison 5) Att: 10,416

Kilmarnock 4 (Skora 32, Invincibile 34, 64, Boyd pen 54)
Dundee 2 (Novo 6, Milne 62) Att: 5,454

Motherwell 3 (Hammell 11, Clarkson 52, Adams 80)
Partick 0 Att: 5,814

Sunday, February 29

Celtic 5 (Pearson 12, Sutton 36, Thompson 48, pen 80, Larsson 55)
Livingston 1 (Lilley 41) Att: 57,973

Dundee Utd 2 (Kerr 31, McLaren 34)
Rangers 0 Att: 10,496

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	26	25	1	0	86	13	76
Rangers	26	19	3	4	52	21	60
Hearts	26	14	5	7	38	28	47
Dunfermline	26	10	8	8	29	35	38
Motherwell	26	10	6	10	31	30	36
Dundee Utd	26	8	6	12	27	41	30
Livingston	26	7	8	11	30	38	29
Dundee	26	7	7	12	32	40	28
Hibernian	26	7	7	12	24	40	28
Kilmarnock	26	8	3	15	32	55	27
Aberdeen	26	7	5	14	30	43	26
Partick	26	3	3	20	27	54	12

LEADING GOALSCORER
21 Henrik Larsson (Celtic)

SCOTTISH CUP – 4th rnd (last 16)

Feb 7: Falkirk 0 Aberdeen 2; Hearts 0 Celtic 3; Motherwell 3 Queen of the South 2; Partick 5 Hamilton 1; St Mirren 0 Inverness CT 1.
Feb 8: Kilmarnock 0 Rangers 2; Spartans 0 Livingston 4.
Feb 24: Clyde 0 Dunfermline 3.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Feb 21: Kom Podgorica 0 Obilic 3; Zeleznik 1 OFK 1; Zemun 0 Vojvodina 0; Red Star 2 Napredak 0; Buducnost 2 Sutjeska 4; Radnicki O 3 Sartid 1.
Feb 22: Borac 0 Partizan 1; Zeta 2 Hajduk K 0.
Feb 28: Zeta 4 Kom Podgorica 0; Napredak 0 Radnicki O 0; Sartid 0 Zemun 0; Vojvodina 1 Buducnost 0; Sutjeska 3 Zeleznik 1; OFK 0 Borac 0; Partizan 2 Obilic 0.
Feb 29: Hajduk K 1 Red Star 2.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star	17	14	1	2	35	7	43
Partizan	17	13	1	3	36	15	40
Sartid	17	10	3	4	32	21	33
Zeleznik	17	10	2	5	25	13	32
OFK	17	8	6	3	21	16	30
Zeta	17	7	4	6	24	20	25
Hajduk K	17	7	3	7	16	14	24
Obilic	17	7	2	8	21	18	23
Sutjeska	17	7	2	8	23	21	23
Zemun	17	5	5	7	14	17	20
Vojvodina	17	4	7	6	15	20	19
Buducnost	17	6	1	10	21	32	19
Radnicki O	17	2	9	6	13	22	15
Borac	17	3	5	9	16	32	14
Napredak	17	2	4	11	14	30	10
Kom Podgorica	17	3	1	13	14	42	10

SPAIN

Saturday, February 7

Real Madrid 2 (Ronaldo 24, Roberto Carlos 58)
Malaga 1 (Luque 73) Att: 80,000

Valencia 3 (Mista 30, 71, Vicente 66)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 45,000

Sunday, February 8

Albacete 0
Dep La Coruna 2 (Scaloni 59, Luque 61) Att: 15,000

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Urzaiz 12, Yeste pen 42)
Murcia 1 (Luis Garcia 15) Att: 32,000

Celta Vigo 2 (Milosevic 18, 47)
Villarreal 1 (Anderson 85) Att: 18,000

Espanyol 2 (Tamudo 56, Fredson 59)
Valladolid 0 Att: 21,200

Osasuna 1 (Punal pen 67)
Barcelona 2 (Saviola 43, Ronaldinho 76) Att: 18,095

Racing Santander 1 (Benjamin og 6)
Betis 2 (Benjamin 33, Joaquin 90) Att: 13,410

Sevilla 3 (Julio Baptista 50, Gallardo 55, Marti 85)
Mallorca 0 Att: 35,000

Zaragoza 2 (Villa 6, pen 90)
Real Sociedad 1 (Xabi Alonso 37) Att: 30,450

Saturday, February 14

Murcia 1 (Luis Garcia pen 89)
Sevilla 3 (Julio Baptista pen 4, pen 72, 90) Att: 9,000

Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 39)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Yeste 14) Att: 28,871

Sunday, February 15

Barcelona 3 (Saviola 10, Ronaldinho 25, Luis Garcia 44)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Nikolaidis 22) Att: 83,559

Betis 2 (Denilson 33, Alfonso 38)
Zaragoza 1 (Cani 3) Att: 29,548

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Victor 22, 36)
Osasuna 0 Att: 30,260

Malaga 5 (Miguel Angel 36, Manu 43, Juanito 45, Salva 61, Insua 83)
Espanyol 2 (Lopo 44, Tamudo 77) Att: 27,825

Mallorca 0
Albacete 0 Att: 22,752

Real Madrid 1 (Figo pen 90)
Valencia 1 (Ayala 74) Att: 73,248

Valladolid 0
Celta Vigo 2 (Mostovoi 47, Jesuli 87) Att: 21,200

Villarreal 6 (Belletti 3, 35, Riquelme pen 31, Jose Mari 67, Anderson 72, Juanma og 90)
Racing Santander 3 (Benayoun 33, 84, Cristian Alvarez 56) Att: 11,256

Saturday, February 21

Atletico Madrid 0
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 35,000

Celta Vigo 0
Malaga 2 (Salva pen 15, Diego Alonso 90) Att: 18,000

Espanyol 2 (Tamudo pen 32, Lopo 84)
Real Madrid 4 (Ronaldo pen 26, 70, Roberto Carlos 53, Raul Bravo 67) Att: 46,100

Sevilla 1 (Hornos 90)
Real Sociedad 0 Att: 35,000

Valencia 0
Barcelona 1 (Gerard 77) Att: 45,000

Sunday, February 22

Albacete 1 (Ivan Cuadrado og 9)
Murcia 0 Att: 11,550

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Ezquerro 57)
Betis 1 (Benjamin 53) Att: 36,000

Osasuna 1 (Aloisi 17)
Mallorca 1 (Delibasic 6) Att: 16,517

Racing Santander 1 (Bodipo 67)
Valladolid 0 Att: 16,875

Zaragoza 4 (Ponzio 3, Cani 20, Dani 38, Villa 79)
Villarreal 1 (Riquelme pen 62) Att: 26,250

Saturday, February 28

Betis 1 (Alfonso pen 2)
Sevilla 1 (Javi Navarro 27) Att: 47,000

Valladolid 1 (Oscar 33)
Zaragoza 2 (Generelo 8, Galletti 81) Att: 9,000

Sunday, February 29

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Pandiani 50, 56)
Barcelona 3 (Ronaldinho 24, 48, Saviola 29) Att: 29,000

Espanyol 2 (Tamudo 38, 75)
Valencia 1 (Mista 77) Att: 18,900

Malaga 1 (Salva 38)
Racing Santander 0 Att: 20,000

Mallorca 0
Atletico Madrid 1 (Fernando Torres 90) Att: 22,000

Murcia 0
Osasuna 1 (Webo 30) Att: 8,400

Real Madrid 4 (Ronaldo 54, Zidane 64, 90, Figo 71)
Celta Vigo 2 (Ilic 17, Milosevic 90) Att: 75,000

Real Sociedad 0
Albacete 1 (Redondo 48) Att: 22,367

Villarreal 0
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Jonan 44) Att: 19,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	26	18	5	3	54	29	59
Valencia	26	15	6	5	47	20	51
Dep La Coruna	26	15	5	6	43	20	50
Barcelona	26	13	7	6	42	30	46
Athletic Bilbao	26	11	8	7	33	29	41
Atletico Madrid	26	11	7	8	32	31	40
Osasuna	26	9	11	6	26	22	38
Betis	26	9	10	7	34	28	37
Villarreal	26	10	6	10	36	35	36
Sevilla	26	9	8	9	36	28	35
Malaga	26	11	2	13	36	40	35
Racing Santander	26	9	6	11	33	39	33
Real Sociedad	26	8	7	11	30	37	31
Zaragoza	26	8	5	13	29	37	29
Valladolid	26	7	8	11	29	38	29
Albacete	26	8	5	13	25	34	29
Mallorca	26	8	5	13	29	44	29
Celta Vigo	26	6	9	11	36	47	27
Espanyol	26	7	2	17	26	48	23
Murcia	26	2	10	14	22	42	16

LEADING GOALSCORERS
22 Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
15 Salva (Malaga)
14 Mista (Valencia)
13 Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid)

SPANISH CUP – semi-finals

2nd legs
Feb 11: Sevilla 1 Real Madrid 0 *Real Madrid 2-1 on agg.*
Feb 12: Zaragoza 0 Alaves 0 *Agg 1-1. Zaragoza on away goals*

SWITZERLAND

Feb 15: Aarau 2 Zurich 4; Grasshopper 1 Neuchatel Xamax 0; Servette 3 St Gallen 1; Wil 1900 0 Thun 2; Young Boys 0 Basle 1.
Feb 22: Neuchatel Xamax 0 Wil 1900 2; St Gallen 1 Young Boys 3; Thun 6 Aarau 3; Zurich 2 Servette 0; Basle 2 Grasshopper 2.
Feb 28: Basle 6 Neuchatel Xamax 0; Servette 3 Thun 1.
Feb 29: Wil 1900 1 Aarau 1; Young Boys 2 Zurich 2; Grasshopper 3 St Gallen 2.

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SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	21	19	2	0	65	18	59
Young Boys	21	13	3	5	44	29	42
Servette	21	11	4	6	39	33	37
Grasshopper	21	8	3	10	38	45	27
Thun	21	7	6	8	29	38	27
Aarau	21	5	8	8	35	43	23
Zurich	21	6	3	12	33	35	21
Wil 1900	21	5	6	10	26	38	21
St Gallen	21	5	5	11	28	41	20
Neuchatel X	21	4	4	13	19	36	16

TURKEY

Feb 6: Ankaragucu 1 Besiktas 1.
Feb 7: Elazigspor 0 Fenerbahce 1; Gaziantepspor 2 Genclerbirligi 0; Diyarbakirspor 1 Konyaspor 1; Malatyaspor 0 Rizespor 1; Denizlispor 1 Samsunspor 0.
Feb 8: Trabzonspor 2 Adanaspor 1; Istanbulspor 1 Sebatspor 3; Galatasaray 0 Bursaspor 0.
Feb 14: Adanaspor 1 Elazigspor 2; Samsunspor 1 Malatyaspor 0.
Feb 15: Bursaspor 1 Ankaragucu 0; Besiktas 3 Denizlispor 1; Genclerbirligi 2 Galatasaray 2; Konyaspor 0 Gaziantepspor 3; Sebatspor 0 Trabzonspor 0; Fenerbahce 2 Diyarbakirspor 2.
Feb 16: Rizespor 1 Istanbulspor 0.
Feb 21: Genclerbirligi 2 Bursaspor 0; Galatasaray 2 Konyaspor 1; Malatyaspor 0 Besiktas 0.
Feb 22: Diyarbakirspor 3 Adanaspor 1; Denizlispor 0 Ankaragucu 1; Gaziantepspor 1 Fenerbahce 5; Trabzonspor 1 Rizespor 0; Istanbulspor 0 Samsunspor 0.
Feb 23: Elazigspor 3 Sebatspor 1.
Feb 28: Rizespor 5 Elazigspor 4; Samsunspor 1 Trabzonspor 3.
Feb 29: Bursaspor 0 Denizlispor 1; Sebatspor 0 Diyarbakirspor 1; Fenerbahce 2 Galatasaray 1; Adanaspor 2 Gaziantepspor 3; Konyaspor 4 Genclerbirligi 1; Besiktas 1 Istanbulspor 2; Ankaragucu 0 Malatyaspor 0.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fenerbahce	23	15	6	2	54	27	51
Besiktas	23	15	6	2	48	23	51
Trabzonspor	23	13	5	5	36	27	44
Denizlispor	23	12	3	8	37	27	39
Galatasaray	23	10	8	5	35	28	38
Gaziantepspor	23	12	2	9	35	34	38
Diyarbakirspor	23	10	7	6	36	29	37
Malatyaspor	23	8	9	6	31	23	33
Samsunspor	23	9	6	8	34	34	33
Genclerbirligi	23	9	4	10	40	33	31
Konyaspor	23	6	10	7	34	36	28
Ankaragucu	23	7	6	10	30	36	27
Istanbulspor	23	7	5	11	31	32	26
Rizespor	23	7	3	13	24	41	24
Sebatspor	23	5	7	11	26	36	22
Elazigspor	23	4	6	13	29	53	18
Bursaspor	23	3	8	12	17	29	17
Adanaspor	23	3	3	17	21	50	12

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

Group 1

Feb 11 - Mexico City
America (Mex) 3 (Blanco 26, pen 90, Navia 86)
Penarol (Uru) 1 (Leal 25)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Cervantes (Col)
Sent off: Diogo (Penarol) 89min

Feb 19 - La Paz
The Strongest (Bol) 0
America 0
Ref: Oliveira (Bra)

Mar 2 - Montevideo
Penarol 1 (Bueno 60)
Sao Caetano (Bra) 1 (Fabricio Carvalho 35)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sao Caetano	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
America	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Penarol	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
The Strongest	2	0	1	1	2	4	1

Group 2

Feb 10 - Buenos Aires
Velez Sarsfield (Arg) 1 (Garcia og 90)
Maracaibo (Ven) 1 (Colliard 62)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Pozo (Chl)
Sent off: Fernandez (Maracaibo) 90min

Feb 19 - Manizales
Once Caldas (Col) 3 (Valentierra pen 15, pen 63, Diaz 88)
Fenix (Uru) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ramos (Ecu)

Feb 25 - Maracaibo
Maracaibo 1 (Casseres 45)
Once Caldas 2 (Fabbro 3, Galvan 89)
HT: 1-1, **Ref:** Garay (Per)

Feb 25 - Montevideo
Fenix 2 (Rodriguez 55, Carini 88)
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Bianchi 16)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Lopes (Bra)

Mar 3 - Montevideo
Fenix 1 (Vigneri 51)
Maracaibo 2 (M Martinez 27, Moran 83)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Sequeira (Arg)
Sent off: Emanuelle 23min, Mendez 44min (both Fenix); M Martinez (Maracaibo) 44min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Once Caldas	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Maracaibo	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Fenix	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
Velez Sarsfield	2	0	1	1	2	3	1

Group 3

Feb 10 - Concepcion
U de Concepcion (Chl) 1 (Solis pen 73)
Cruzeiro (Bra) 3 (Alex 18, Maicon 20, Gomez og 80)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Gimenez (Arg)

Feb 12 - Caracas
Caracas (Ven) 0
Santos Laguna (Mex) 1 (Vuoso 73)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Reinoso (Ecu)

Feb 17 - Belo Horizonte
Cruzeiro 1 (Guilherme 24)
Santos Laguna 1 (Vuoso 65)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Brazenas (Arg)

Feb 24 - Concepcion
U de Concepcion 2 (Caceres 76, Gomez 90)
Caracas 3 (Cominges 34, 37, Rojas 50)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Invernizzi (Par)
Sent off: Mea Vitali (Caracas) 90min

Mar 2 - Caracas
Caracas 1 (Rey 17)
U de Concepcion 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ramos (Ecu)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Caracas	4	2	0	2	5	6	6
Santos Laguna	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
U de Concepcion	4	0	1	3	5	9	1

Group 4

Feb 10 - Calama
Cobreloa (Chl) 0
LDU Quito (Ecu) 2 (Aguinaga 52, Murillo 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Aguilera (Bol)
Sent off: B Gonzalez (Cobreloa) 57min; Urrutia (LDU) 71min

Feb 11 - Lima
Alianza Lima (Per) 1 (Vilchez 27)
Sao Paulo (Bra) 2 (Rogerio 22, Fabao 64)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Martin (Arg)

Feb 25 - Quito
LDU Quito 3 (Paredes 65, Villagra 86, Murillo 88)
Alianza Lima 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Paniagua (Bol)

Feb 26 - Sao Paulo
Sao Paulo 3 (Luis Fabiano 3, 90, Fuentes og 11)
Cobreloa 1 (Cicinho og 48)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Torres (Par)
Sent off: Fuentes (Cobreloa) 45min

Mar 4 - Quito
LDU Quito 3 (Paredes 38, G Espinoza 45, Urrutia 80)
Sao Paulo 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)

Mar 4 - Lima
Alianza Lima 2 (Farfan 68, 81)
Cobreloa 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Viera (Uru)
Sent off: E Gonzalez (Cobreloa) 73min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LDU Quito	3	3	0	0	8	0	9
Sao Paulo	3	2	0	1	5	5	6
Alianza Lima	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Cobreloa	3	0	0	3	1	7	0

Group 5

Feb 12 - Quito
El Nacional (Ecu) 0
Nacional (Uru) 0
Ref: Simon (Bra)
Sent off: Valencia (El Nacional) 35min; Morales (Nacional) 35min

Feb 12 - Avellaneda
Independiente (Arg) 4 (Gimenez 16, Rios 43, Losada 59, 73)
Cienciano (Per) 2 (Acasiete 69, Saraz 82)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Sent off: La Rosa (Cienciano) 44min

Feb 24 - Montevideo
Nacional 0
Independiente 0
Ref: Rezende (Bra)
Sent off: Guerrero (Nacional) 77min; Rios 65min, Caballero 79min (both Independiente)

Feb 26 - Lima
Cienciano 1 (Ibarra 63)
El Nacional 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Duque (Col)

Mar 2 - Avellaneda
Independiente 2 (Quinteros pen 52, pen 90)
El Nacional 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Torres (Par)
Sent off: Ibarra 57min, Guagua 57min (both El Nacional)

Mar 4 - Montevideo
Nacional 1 (Machado 29)
Cienciano 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Oliveira (Bra)
Sent off: Machado (Nacional) 88min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Independiente	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Nacional	3	1	2	0	1	0	5
Cienciano	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
El Nacional	3	0	1	2	0	3	1

Group 6

Feb 11 - San Cristobal
Deportivo Tachira (Ven) 0
River Plate (Arg) 0
Ref: Lecca (Per)

Feb 24 - Ibague
Tolima (Col) 1 (Velasquez 14)
Deportivo Tachira 1 (Panigutti 82)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Carpio (Ecu)

Feb 25 - Buenos Aires
River Plate 4 (Coudet 27, 75, Cavenaghi 44, Gonzalez 90)
Libertad (Par) 1 (Morinigo 64)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Chandia (Chl)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
River Plate	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Dep Tachira	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Tolima	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Libertad	2	0	1	1	1	4	1

Group 7

Feb 12 - Guayaquil
Barcelona (Ecu) 4 (Teixeira 44, 83, George 62, Vera 76)
Jorge Wilstermann (Bol) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Duque (Col)

Feb 18 - Santos
Santos (Bra) 2 (Robgol 1, Lopes 90)
Guarani (Par) 2 (Diaz 66, 85)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Komjetan (Uru)

Mar 3 - Cochabamba
Jorge Wilstermann 0
Guarani 0
Ref: Hidalgo (Per)

Mar 3 - Guayaquil
Barcelona 1 (Teixeira 63)
Santos 3 (Renato 43, Basilio 49, Robinho 82)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Martin (Arg)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	3	2	1	0	8	5	7
Barcelona	3	1	1	1	5	3	4
Guarani	3	0	3	0	2	2	3
J Wilstermann	3	0	1	2	2	7	1

Group 8

Feb 18 - La Paz
Bolivar (Bol) 3 (Castillo 17, 34, 57)
Boca Juniors (Arg) 1 (Caneo 45)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Souza (Bra)

Mar 2 - Cali
Deportivo Cali (Col) 3 (Candelo 27, Garcia 85, Moreno 88)
Bolivar 1 (L Gutierrez 73)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Solorzano (Ven)

Mar 3 - Buenos Aires
Boca Juniors 2 (Barros Schelotto pen 19, 72)
Colo Colo (Chl) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cali	2	2	0	0	6	3	6
Bolivar	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Boca Juniors	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Colo Colo	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

Group 9

Feb 10 - Lima
Sporting Cristal (Per) 4 (Soto 28, Bonnet 32, 90, Sergio Junior 81)
Coritiba (Bra) 1 (Laercio 19)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Brand (Ven)
Sent off: Roberto Brum (Coritiba) 74min

Feb 17 - Curitiba
Coritiba 1 (Capixaba 21)
Olimpia (Par) 1 (Villalba 43)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Vazquez (Uru)

Feb 26 - Rosario
Rosario Central (Arg) 1 (Messera 90)
Sporting Cristal 1 (Bonnet 72)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Selman (Chl)

Mar 4 - Rosario
Rosario Central 2 (Sanchez 29, Herrera 75)
Coritiba 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Mendez (Uru)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosario Central	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Sporting Cristal	2	1	1	0	5	2	4
Olimpia	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
Coritiba	3	0	1	2	2	7	1

Group winners and the five best runners-up qualify for second round; other four runners-up play off in two head-to-head ties for last two second round berths

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP (2003)

Tuesday, February 24

Estudiantes 0
Atletico Rafaela 0
Last 33 minutes of game abandoned on Nov 26 because of floodlight failure

Wednesday, March 3

Atletico Rafaela 1 (Gandin 18)
River Plate 2 (Lopez 46, Luduena 56)

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, February 13

Racing Club 1 (Mirosevic 32)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Moreno y Fabianesi 61)

Saturday, February 14

Chacarita Juniors 0
San Lorenzo 2 (Romagnoli 73, Ormazabal 90)

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Adinolfi 56)
Banfield 1 (Amato 41)

Velez Sarsfield 3 (Zarate pen 29, 56, Bianchi 43)
Rosario Central 0

Sunday, February 15

Atletico Rafaela 0
Quilmes 0

Boca Juniors 0
Gimnasia LP 0

Estudiantes 1 (Colotto 49)
Independiente 4 (Quinteros pen 24, Gimenez 28, 87, Losada 89)

Lanus 3 (Graziani 41, Salomon 66, Coria 80)
Olimpo 0

Nueva Chicago 2 (Gonzalez 17, Tilger 60)
River Plate 2 (Cavenaghi 25, Sand 77)

Talleres Cordoba 4 (Velazquez 18, Piriz Alvez 51, Osorio 66, De Bruno pen 75)
Arsenal 3 (Vilallonga 7, Calderon pen 72, 83)

Friday, February 20

Banfield 1 (Ortiz 90)
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Valdemarin 3, Sanguinetti og 45)

Saturday, February 21

Gimnasia LP 6 (Rueda 6, 43, Lobos 13, 52, Olveira pen 37, Castillo 85)
Chacarita Juniors 1 (Graf 56)

Independiente 1 (Gimenez 28)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Rosales 73)

Quilmes 1 (Lopez 39)
Nueva Chicago 1 (Gonzalez pen 5)

Sunday, February 22

Arsenal 3 (Calderon pen 35, Ruiz 41, Gomez 88)
Atletico Rafaela 2 (Gandin 64, 76)

Colon Santa Fe 3 (Carignano 64, Martinez 70, Moreno y Fabianesi 83)
Lanus 2 (Graziani 51, Gonzalez og 88)

Olimpo 1 (Delorte 70)
Talleres Cordoba 4 (Osorio 25, Salas 45, Erpen 66, Perrone 90)

River Plate 3 (Cavenaghi 22, 88, Salas 31)
Estudiantes 0

Rosario Central 1 (Belloso 76)
Boca Juniors 2 (Cardozo 44, 46)

San Lorenzo 0
Racing Club 4 (Romero 27, Casas 49, 53, Gonzalez 84)

Friday, February 27

Independiente 0
Banfield 1 (Bustos Montoya 90)

Saturday, February 28

Atletico Rafaela 0
Olimpo 2 (Mena pen 75, Clementz 82)

Lanus 0
San Lorenzo 4 (Ormazabal 16, Diaz 79, 90, Cordone pen 81)

Racing Club 1 (Romero 59)
Gimnasia LP 0

Sunday, February 29

Boca Juniors 3 (Alcaraz og 24, Rodriguez 38, Vargas 80)
Velez Sarsfield 3 (Zarate 5, De Souza 63, Bianchi 82)

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Pena pen 15)
Rosario Central 1 (Talamonti 87)

Estudiantes 1 (Fabbri 74)
Quilmes 0

Newell's Old Boys 2 (Vasquez 72, Rodas 84)
River Plate 3 (Montenegro 5, Salas 30, Sambueza 82)

Nueva Chicago 2 (Mandra 3, Carranza 57)
Arsenal 1 (Calderon 41)

Talleres Cordoba 4 (Piriz Alvez 12, 51, Osorio 46, 56)
Colon Santa Fe 0

ARGENTINA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Talleres Cordoba	3	3	0	0	12	4	9
Racing Club	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
River Plate	3	2	1	0	8	4	7
Velez Sarsfield	3	2	1	0	8	4	7
San Lorenzo	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Boca Juniors	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
Nueva Chicago	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
Gimnasia LP	3	1	1	1	6	2	4
Independiente	3	1	1	1	5	3	4
Banfield	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Colon Santa Fe	3	1	1	1	4	7	4
Arsenal	3	1	0	2	7	8	3
Lanus	3	1	0	2	5	7	3
Olimpo	3	1	0	2	3	7	3
Estudiantes	3	1	0	2	2	7	3
Newell's OB	3	0	2	1	4	5	2
Quilmes	3	0	2	1	1	2	2
Atletico Rafaela	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
Rosario Central	3	0	1	2	2	6	1
Chacarita Jnrs	3	0	1	2	2	9	1

BOLIVIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 14: Iberoamericana 1 Santa Cruz 3.
Feb 15: Union Central 0 La Paz 2; The Strongest 1 Blooming 0; Aurora 4 Real Potosi 2; Oriente 1 Bolivar 1.
Feb 18: San Jose 2 Jorge Wilstermann 3.
Feb 22: Jorge Wilstermann 5 La Paz 1.
Feb 25: Bolivar 4 San Jose 1; Iberoamericana 1 Union Central 0.
Feb 26: Real Potosi 3 The Strongest 2; Santa Cruz 3 Aurora 1.
Feb 29: Aurora 5 Iberoamericana 1; The Strongest 2 Santa Cruz 0; Oriente 1 Real Potosi 1; San Jose 2 Blooming 1; La Paz 0 Bolivar 2; Union Central 2 Jorge Wilstermann 1.

BOLIVIA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivar	3	2	1	0	7	2	7
Aurora	3	2	0	1	10	6	6
J Wilstermann	3	2	0	1	9	5	6
Santa Cruz	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
The Strongest	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Real Potosi	3	1	1	1	6	7	4
Union Central	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
San Jose	3	1	0	2	5	8	3
La Paz	3	1	0	2	3	7	3
Iberoamericana	3	1	0	2	3	8	3
Oriente	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Blooming	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

CHILE

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 6: Santiago Wanderers 1 Cobreloa 0.
Feb 7: Union Espanola 3 Palestino 5; Coquimbo Unido 2 Cobresal 1; U Catolica 3 Audax Italiano 2; Dep Temuco 0 U de Concepcion 5; Rangers 1 Dep La Serena 4.
Feb 8: Huachipato 0 San Felipe 0; Puerto Montt 3 Everton 2; Colo Colo 0 U de Chile 4.
Feb 13: Audax Italiano 5 Coquimbo Unido 2.
Feb 14: Cobresal 0 Colo Colo 1; U de Chile 2 Rangers 0; U de Concepcion 2 Santiago Wanderers 1; Dep La Serena 2 Union Espanola 4; Palestino 2 Puerto Montt 0.
Feb 15: Dep Temuco 1 Huachipato 3; Cobreloa 2 U Catolica 1; Everton 0 San Felipe 1.
Feb 20: Santiago Wanderers 2 Dep Temuco 0.
Feb 21: San Felipe 2 Palestino 3; Union Espanola 3 U de Chile 1; Rangers 2 Cobresal 4; Coquimbo Unido 3 Cobreloa 3; U Catolica 3 U de Concepcion 4.
Feb 22: Huachipato 2 Everton 4; Puerto Montt 1 Dep La Serena 2; Colo Colo 2 Audax Italiano 1.
Feb 27: U de Concepcion 5 Coquimbo Unido 0; Palestino 4 Everton 0.
Feb 28: Santiago Wanderers 0 Huachipato 2; Dep Temuco 1 U Catolica 0; U de Chile 6 Puerto Montt 1; Dep La Serena 3 San Felipe 0.
Feb 29: Cobreloa 3 Colo Colo 0; Audax Italiano 3 Rangers 1; Cobresal 3 Union Espanola 4.

CHILE – OPENING – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Audax Italiano	4	2	0	2	11	8	6
Colo Colo	4	2	0	2	3	8	6
San Felipe	4	1	1	2	3	6	4
Cobresal	4	1	0	3	8	9	3

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Concepcion	4	4	0	0	16	4	12
Palestino	4	4	0	0	14	5	12
Dep La Serena	4	3	0	1	11	6	9
Dep Temuco	4	1	0	3	2	10	3
Rangers	4	0	0	4	4	13	0

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Union Espanola	4	3	0	1	14	11	9
Cobreloa	4	2	1	1	8	5	7
Coquimbo Unido	4	1	1	2	7	14	4
U Catolica	4	1	0	3	7	9	3
Everton	4	1	0	3	6	10	3

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	4	3	0	1	13	4	9
Huachipato	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
Sant Wanderers	4	2	0	2	4	4	6
Puerto Montt	4	1	0	3	5	12	3

COLOMBIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 7: Millonarios 2 Tulua 0.
Feb 8: Chico 1 At Junior 1; Dep Pasto 1 Indep Santa Fe 0; America 4 Quindio 0; Envigado 1 Dep Cali 1; Magdalena 0 Bucaramanga 0; Pereira 1 Once Caldas 1; At Nacional 4 At Huila 0; Tolima 0 Indep Medellin 0.
Feb 14: Indep Santa Fe 1 At Nacional 1.
Feb 15: Indep Medellin 1 Millonarios 0; Dep Cali 3 America 1; Bucaramanga 2 Envigado 2; Once Caldas 1 Tolima 0; At Huila 0 Pereira 1; Tulua 3 Magdalena 1; Quindio 1 Chico 2; At Junior 2 Dep Pasto 0.
Feb 19: Chico 1 America 2.
Feb 20: Tolima 0 At Huila 2.
Feb 21: Dep Cali 2 Bucaramanga 0; Magdalena 0 Indep Medellin 1.
Feb 22: Dep Pasto 2 Quindio 1; Pereira 2 Indep Santa Fe 1; Envigado 4 Tulua 3; Millonarios 0 Once Caldas 1; At Nacional 2 At Junior 1.
Feb 25: America 2 Bucaramanga 1; Indep Medellin 2 Envigado 2; At Huila 3 Millonarios 0; Tulua 1 Dep Cali 0; Chico 1 Dep Pasto 1.
Feb 26: Quindio 1 At Nacional 2.
Feb 28: Dep Cali 3 Indep Medellin 1.
Feb 29: Millonarios 1 Indep Santa Fe 1; Dep Pasto 1 America 0; Pereira 1 Quindio 1; Tolima 1 At Junior 1; Magdalena 1 At Huila 1; Envigado 0 Once Caldas 1; Bucaramanga 3 Tulua 3; Nacional 2 Chico 1.

COLOMBIA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At Nacional	5	4	1	0	11	4	13
Dep Cali	5	3	1	1	9	4	10
Once Caldas	4	3	1	0	4	1	10
Dep Pasto	5	3	1	1	5	4	10
America	5	3	0	2	9	6	9
Pereira	4	2	2	0	5	3	8
Indep Medellin	5	2	2	1	5	5	8
Tulua	5	2	1	2	10	10	7
At Huila	5	2	1	2	6	6	7
Envigado	5	1	3	1	9	9	6
At Junior	4	1	2	1	5	4	5
Chico	5	1	2	2	6	7	5
Millonarios	5	1	1	3	3	6	4
Bucaramanga	5	0	3	2	6	9	3
Indep Santa Fe	4	0	2	2	3	5	2
Magdalena	4	0	2	2	2	5	2
Tolima	4	0	2	2	1	4	2
Quindio	5	0	1	4	4	11	1

ECUADOR

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 6: LDU Quito 3 Espoli 0; Dep Cuenca 0 El Nacional 0.
Feb 8: Aucas 2 Olmedo 0; Barcelona 0 Dep Quito 2; Macara 1 Emelec 0.
Feb 15: Olmedo 0 LDU Quito 1; Dep Quito 3 Dep Cuenca 2; Espoli 1 Barcelona 1; El Nacional 2 Macara 0; Emelec 1 Aucas 0.
Feb 18: LDU Quito 2 Aucas 3; El Nacional 3 Dep Quito 1; Barcelona 0 Olmedo 1; Dep Cuenca 2 Emelec 0; Macara 0 Espoli 0.
Feb 22: Espoli 1 Dep Cuenca 2; Dep Quito 2 LDU Quito 3; Aucas 1 Barcelona 1; Olmedo 3 Macara 3; Emelec 1 El Nacional 0.
Feb 29: Dep Cuenca 1 Olmedo 0; Barcelona 5 LDU Quito 2; Macara 0 Aucas 2; Dep Quito 2 Emelec 0; El Nacional 1 Espoli 1.

ECUADOR – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aucas	5	3	1	1	8	4	10
Dep Cuenca	5	3	1	1	7	4	10
Dep Quito	5	3	0	2	10	8	9
LDU Quito	5	3	0	2	11	10	9
El Nacional	5	2	2	1	6	3	8
Emelec	5	2	0	3	2	5	6
Barcelona	5	1	2	2	7	7	5
Macara	5	1	2	2	4	7	5
Olmedo	5	1	1	3	4	7	4
Espoli	5	0	3	2	3	7	3

PARAGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 7: Sportivo Luqueno 0 12 de Octubre 0.
Feb 8: Nacional 1 Sport Colombia 1; Libertad 2 Tacuary 1; Guarani 1 Cerro Porteno 3; Olimpia 2 Sol de America 0.
Feb 13: Olimpia 1 Nacional 1.
Feb 14: Sol de America 0 Guarani 1; Tacuary 3 Sport Colombia 0.
Feb 15: Cerro Porteno 1 Sportivo Luqueno 1; 12 de Octubre 1 Libertad 4.
Feb 20: Libertad 0 Cerro Porteno 0.
Feb 21: Nacional 0 Tacuary 2; Sport Colombia 3 12 de Octubre 2; Guarani 0 Olimpia 0.
Feb 22: Sportivo Luqueno 4 Sol de America 2.
Feb 28: Guarani 2 Nacional 0.
Feb 29: Olimpia 2 Sportivo Luqueno 1; Sol de America 1 Libertad 2; Cerro Porteno 1 Sport Colombia 0; 12 de Octubre 0 Tacuary 0.

PARAGUAY – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	4	3	1	0	8	3	10
Cerro Porteno	4	2	2	0	5	2	8
Olimpia	4	2	2	0	5	2	8
Tacuary	4	2	1	1	6	2	7
Guarani	4	2	1	1	4	3	7
Sportivo Luqueno	4	1	2	1	6	5	5
Sport Colombia	4	1	1	2	4	7	4
12 de Octubre	4	0	2	2	3	7	2
Nacional	4	0	2	2	2	6	2
Sol de America	4	0	0	4	3	9	0

VENEZUELA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 4: Trujillanos 2 Dep Tachira 2.
Feb 6: Ital-Chacao 2 Maracaibo 1.
Feb 8: Mineros Guayana 1 Caracas 1; El Vigia 1 Carabobo 2; Estudiantes 0 Monagas 0.
Feb 11: Monagas 0 Trujillanos 0; Carabobo 2 Mineros Guayana 1.
Feb 15: Carabobo 2 Caracas 1; Mineros Guayana 3 Maracaibo 0; El Vigia 0 Dep Tachira 4; Ital-Chacao 0 Monagas 0; Trujillanos 1 Estudiantes 1.
Feb 19: Caracas 1 Trujillanos 0; Estudiantes 1 Ital-Chacao 1; Monagas 3 El Vigia 0.
Feb 20: Dep Tachira 0 Mineros Guayana 0; Maracaibo 1 Carabobo 0.
Feb 29: Carabobo 0 Dep Tachira 1; Mineros Guayana 3 Monagas 2; El Vigia 1 Estudiantes 3; Ital-Chacao 0 Trujillanos 1.

VENEZUELA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Caracas	7	5	1	1	14	5	16
Dep Tachira	7	4	2	1	13	8	14
Mineros Guayana	8	3	4	1	12	7	13
Carabobo	8	4	1	3	8	7	13
Ital-Chacao	7	3	3	1	8	6	12
Trujillanos	8	1	6	1	5	5	9
Monagas	8	1	4	3	8	9	7
Estudiantes	8	1	4	3	8	12	7
Maracaibo	7	1	3	3	5	10	6
El Vigia	8	1	0	7	6	18	3

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 7: Toluca 2 Morelia 0; Veracruz 1 Atlas 1; Cruz Azul 1 San Luis 4; Tigres 1 Gallos Blancos 2; Guadalajara 1 Pachuca 0; Necaxa 0 Jaguares 1.
Feb 8: Pumas UNAM 3 Santos 2; Irapuato 2 Monterrey 1; Puebla 1 Atlante 1; Tecos UAG 1 America 1.
Feb 14: Jaguares 3 Puebla 1; Morelia 0 Guadalajara 1; Tigres 3 Irapuato 1; San Luis 0 Veracruz 0; Atlante 2 Pumas UNAM 4; Atlas 3 Tecos UAG 2.
Feb 15: Pachuca 0 Necaxa 0; America 3 Monterrey 2; Gallos Blancos 2 Toluca 1.
Feb 21: Veracruz 2 Santos 1; Toluca 3 Tigres 2; Cruz Azul 1 Atlante 3; Monterrey 1 Atlas 1; Guadalajara 2 Gallos Blancos 0; Necaxa 2 Morelia 1.
Feb 22: Pumas UNAM 0 Jaguares 1; Irapuato 2 America 1; Puebla 3 Pachuca 0; Tecos UAG 1 San Luis 2.
Feb 25: Toluca 1 Irapuato 1; Jaguares 2 Cruz Azul 1; Santos 2 Tecos UAG 1; Atlante 3 Veracruz 3; Pachuca 0 Pumas UNAM 3; Gallos Blancos 1 Necaxa 1; Morelia 1 Puebla 0; San Luis 1 Monterrey 1; Tigres 4 Guadalajara 2.
Feb 26: Atlas 3 America 1.
Feb 28: Veracruz 1 Jaguares 3; Cruz Azul 1 Pachuca 2; Monterrey 2 Santos 1; Guadalajara 0 Toluca 0; Necaxa 2 Tigres 1.

MEXICO – CLOSING – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	8	4	2	2	10	7	14
Monterrey	8	2	4	2	11	9	10
Atlas	7	2	3	2	9	11	9
Pachuca	8	2	3	3	8	13	9
Puebla	7	1	2	4	7	10	5

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jaguares	8	7	0	1	17	8	21
San Luis	7	3	3	1	9	6	12
Tigres	8	3	1	4	18	18	10
Morelia	7	1	2	4	6	10	5
Cruz Azul	7	1	2	4	7	12	5

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pumas UNAM	7	4	2	1	14	6	14
Gallos Blancos	7	2	4	1	10	10	10
America	7	2	3	2	11	12	9
Santos	7	2	1	4	10	11	7
Tecos UAG	7	2	1	4	11	15	7

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	8	5	1	2	9	6	16
Necaxa	8	3	3	2	10	9	12
Irapuato	7	2	3	2	10	11	9
Atlante	7	2	2	3	12	12	8
Veracruz	8	1	4	3	12	15	7

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Feb 11: Zob-Ahan (Irn) 1 Pakhtakor (Uzb) 0; Qatar Sports Club (Qat) 2 Al Riffa (Bhn) 0.
Feb 25: Pakhtakor 1 Qatar Sports Club 0; Al Riffa 0 Zob-Ahan 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zob-Ahan	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Qatar SC	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Pakhtakor	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Al Riffa	2	0	1	1	0	2	1

Group B

Feb 10: Al Quwa Al Jawiya (Irq) 0 Al Qadisiya (Kuw) 1.
Feb 11: Al Wahda (UAE) 0 Al Sadd (Qat) 0.
Feb 25: Al Sadd 1 Al Quwa Al Jawiya 0; Al Qadisiya 1 Al Wahda 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Wahda	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Al Sadd	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Al Qadisiya	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Al Quwa Al J'ya	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

Group C

Feb 10: Al Sharjah (UAE) 2 Al Shorta (Irq) 0.
Feb 25: Al Hilal (Sau) 0 Al Sharjah 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Sharjah	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Al Hilal	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Al Shorta	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

Al Ahli (Bhn) withdrew

Group D

Feb 10: Sepahan (Irn) 4 Neftchi (Uzb) 0.
Feb 11: Al Ittihad (Sau) 2 Al Arabi (Kuw) 0.
Feb 24: Neftchi 1 Al Ittihad 3; Al Arabi 2 Sepahan 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Ittihad	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Sepahan	2	1	1	0	6	2	4
Al Arabi	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Neftchi	2	0	0	2	1	7	0

Group E

Feb 11: Chonbuk Motors (SKo) 1 Jubilo Iwata (Jap) 2; BEC Tero Sasana (Tha) 4 Shanghai Shenhua (Chn) 1.
Feb 25: Jubilo Iwata 3 BEC Tero Sasana 0; Shanghai Shenhua 0 Chonbuk Motors 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jubilo Iwata	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
BEC Tero Sasana	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Chonbuk Motors	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Shanghai S'hua	2	0	0	2	1	5	0

Group F

Feb 10: Krung Thai Bank (Tha) 0 Dalian Shide (Chn) 2.
Feb 11: Hoang Anh Gia Lai (Vie) 5 PSM Makassar (Ins) 1.
Feb 24: Dalian Shide 2 Hoang Anh Gia Lai 0.
Feb 25: PSM Makassar 2 Krung Thai Bank 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dalian Shide	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Hoang Anh Gia Lai	2	1	0	1	5	3	3
Krung Thai Bank	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
PSM Makassar	2	0	0	2	3	8	0

Group G

Feb 10: Binh Dinh (Vie) 0 Yokohama F Marinos (Jap) 3.
Feb 11: Persik Kediri (Ins) 1 Songnam Ilhwa Chunma (SKo) 2.
Feb 24: Yokohama F Marinos 4 Persik Kediri 0.
Feb 25: Songnam Ilhwa Chunma 2 Binh Dinh 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yokohama FM	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Songnam Ilhwa	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Persik Kediri	2	0	0	2	1	6	0
Binh Dinh	2	0	0	2	0	5	0

Group winners qualify for quarter-finals
Bye: Al Ain (UAE; holders)

surely ...

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